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New Teachers’ Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems and Teacher Satisfaction

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NEW TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE-RELATED SCHOOL PROBLEMS AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

by

Amy L. Kavanaugh

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NEW TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE-RELATED SCHOOL PROBLEMS AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

Amy L. Kavanaugh, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 2001

The public is concerned with school safety because of recent school shootings resulting in multiple deaths. Educators are concerned that perceptions of school safety may affect new teacher attrition.

Three questions were examined in this study: (1) What is the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems? (2) Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, size, location, and percentage of minority students?, and (3) Are new teachers’ perceptions of school problems related to their professional satisfaction?

National data gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics through the Schools and Staffing Survey were extracted for this study. A total of 16,351 teachers in their first three years of teaching were surveyed in 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 using the Public School Teacher Questionnaire of the Schools and Staffing Survey. One-way analysis of variance and chi-square tests were used to analyze the research data. Effect sizes were also used to determine the practical significance of the findings.
A description of the trend of new teacher perceptions, various school factors that affect new teacher perceptions, and the relationship between teacher perceptions and satisfaction are provided through this study. Statistically significant differences were found, but because of small effect sizes and small actual differences between means and percentages in this study, no strong conclusions can be made regarding new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems.

The results of this study did not reveal large differences between survey years, school factors, or teacher satisfaction items. It is recommended that future studies using more recent Schools and Staffing Surveys also include the effect sizes as well as means and percentages to determine the practical significance of statistical results. This is important because using large national surveys can result in statistically significant findings simply due to large sample sizes.
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The goal of completing a doctoral degree in education began when I was an undergraduate studying elementary education. It was a challenge to myself that I felt would allow me to make perhaps the greatest difference in public education. I look forward to future opportunities and challenges in the field of education.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Claire Elizabeth, who is smart, beautiful, and truly a joy.

Amy L. Kavanaugh

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Discipline-related school problems have received increased attention because of the public’s concern over school safety. This concern is warranted because Kopka (1997) reports that 82% of schools report increasing violence. In fact, one third of students in 8th and 10th grades have been physically threatened, and 13% have been attacked at school. More than one fourth of students do not feel safe in school. School and government officials have attempted to secure schools for at least a decade, but there is some question as to the level of their success.

Schools began to issue zero-tolerance type policies that called for student expulsion for drug and weapon possession during the early 1990s. In 1994 the federal government signed the Gun-Free Schools Act into law (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). This law mandates expulsion of one year for possession of a weapon and student referral to the criminal justice system. Since 1998 the school shootings in West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; Flint, Michigan; and Santee, California have shocked the nation. In response, former President Clinton directed the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice to develop guidelines for schools to reach out to troubled children (Dwyer, Osher, & Hoffman, 2000). As a result of these actions, it is clear that the public is concerned about school safety. In order to clearly understand the problems that
schools face it is necessary to examine the perspective of those who are perhaps the closest to students, teachers. Studying teachers' perceptions of school problems will provide a more accurate assessment of what occurs in schools today.

Poor student behavior has consequences for young people, teachers, and school culture. If misbehavior fills a significant portion of the school day, there is less time to teach and learn. In order to reach their full potential, students need an environment that makes good use of instructional time and increases student involvement. Therefore, discipline-related school problems affect student achievement (Davis, 1981; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

Not only do discipline-related school problems impact achievement, but these school problems also negatively affect teachers. Many teachers report that discipline issues play a major role in their decision to leave the field (Frantz, 1994; Harris, 1998; Lucas, 1997). Unfortunately, schools lose 20% of new teachers within the first three years in the field (Whitener et al., 1997). This alarming rate of attrition is related to discipline-related school problems. Professionally, teachers remain in teaching if they are empowered and are intrinsically motivated to work with young people. The problems of new teacher attrition and securing competent professionals for teaching positions calls for research into why teachers leave and the factors associated with their professional satisfaction. This study provides a foundation to examine new teachers' perceptions of school discipline issues.

Discipline-related school problems also affect teachers' professional satisfaction. Teachers list student misbehavior and undesirable attitudes as a stress
source (Tang & Yeung, 1999). It is important that teachers have administrative support when dealing with discipline because this support along with good student behavior, and a positive school atmosphere are working conditions associated with higher teacher satisfaction (Lumsden, 1998). Interestingly, teacher satisfaction or morale is related to student achievement. Schools that have higher teacher morale also indicate an increase in student achievement (Ellenberg, 1972). Thus, it is particularly important to assess the severity of discipline-related school problems from the new teacher perspective. Consensus has not been reached about the ways in which external factors affect teacher satisfaction. This study will further research in the area of satisfaction by examining the relationship between certain school problems and professional satisfaction. Although the extrinsic factors of satisfaction will be the focus of this study, a review of how teachers are satisfied intrinsically is necessary.

In addition to affecting students and teachers, discipline problems also change the school culture. Students that exhibit disciplinary problems in the early grades continue to do so throughout school. In fact, the initial problems generally escalate as the student ages (Tobin & Sugai, 1999). There is concern that these discipline-related school problems will develop into violence. As a result, students and teachers worry about their safety in a setting that should actually encourage academic risk taking.

It is evident that the areas affected by discipline-related school problems are associated with student achievement. When students do not feel safe in school, they
are less likely to learn. Students who misbehave tend to continue, which causes the school culture to deteriorate. Likewise, if teachers spend too much time on discipline, they have less instructional time and lower job satisfaction. If all, or even some of these factors are present, student achievement declines.

Statement of the Problem

The public is concerned with school safety and student performance in public schools. Educators are also concerned with these issues as well as securing a competent teaching force. Many politicians insist that the public schools need competition so charter schools, vouchers, and schools of choice have been introduced as the solution to school problems. Others have attempted to deal with school safety with zero tolerance approaches like the 1994 federal Gun-Free Schools Act that mandates expulsion for possession of a weapon (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). However, until a thorough description of school problems exists, educators, politicians, and the like will have to continue to grasp for solutions to problems in schools.

Research on discipline-related school problems does exist. However, more comprehensive study is necessary. In particular, research is sparse on the nature of misbehavior in the classroom (Doyle, 1986; McClendon-Royster, 1990). Previous studies of discipline-related school problems have mainly explored classroom management, examining what teachers do in the classroom to control student behavior (Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Kounin, 1970; Taylor, 1999). These authors and others outlined teacher behaviors that lead
to successful teaching and learning in the classroom. The history of research on discipline-related school problems has included the study of teacher-student exchanges, perceptions of new teachers' weaknesses, qualities of effective managers, and general descriptions of schools and classrooms. Other research relates to description of a single classroom or school (Jackson, 1968; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). Further studies began to examine perceptions of problems in the classroom (McClendon-Royster, 1990; Veenman, 1984). Researchers have concluded that discipline is a complex issue with which teachers, especially new teachers, struggle. The current research further examines qualities of effective teachers and delves into the consequences of ineffective classroom managers.

Of course this previous research is valuable as it lays the foundation for the development of this particular study. Therefore, it is important that this study be comprehensive by incorporating what is known about discipline-related school problems, with issues that remain to be examined. New teachers' perceptions of the severity of discipline related school problems within schools, and not perceptions of their own weaknesses as determined by themselves or administrators will be described in this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study offers an opportunity to examine discipline-related school problems from a unique perspective. The trend of new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems from 1987–1994 will be described. Then these perceptions will be compared using school characteristics including school size, level,
location, teacher gender, and percentage of minority students. Finally, the researcher will describe the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems and their professional satisfaction.

Schools across the country are included in this comprehensive study. A portion of this study is longitudinal to examine how new teachers' perceptions have changed between 1987 and 1994. School factors associated with discipline-related problems are investigated. Finally, the nature of the relationship between teacher professional satisfaction and school problems is examined.

To be more specific, the following issues are addressed: (a) new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems, (b) school factors associated with discipline-related school problems, and (c) professional satisfaction of new teachers.

Research Questions

1. What is the trend of new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems?

2. Do new teachers' perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, size, location, and percentage of minority students?

3. Are new teachers' perceptions of school problems related to their professional satisfaction?

Importance of the Study

Examining the trend of teachers' perceptions of discipline issues in the schools gives a clearer picture of the issues troubling teachers. Knowledge and
understanding of these perceptions can be used by school districts for policy making related to discipline issues, and for determining a need for professional development opportunities for new teachers. Because discipline or classroom management problems may lead to new teacher attrition, looking closer at new teachers’ perceptions of discipline issues will allow one to determine what kinds of schools are having problems.

Teacher education programs may also use the results of this study to refine the classroom management training offered at the college level. Research conducted since the 1970s supports the need to increase the amount of professional development teachers receive in classroom management, or the strategies used to solve the problem of order in classrooms. Teachers also identify discipline as one of the most perplexing issues during the first few years of teaching. Therefore, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of student misbehavior, school factors associated with these problems and their relationship with professional satisfaction.

The Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey will be used in this study, which is nationally conducted and representative, to determine (a) new teachers’ perceptions of school problems, (b) factors associated with these problems, and (c) the relationship of school problems and teacher professional satisfaction. This study is comprehensive because multiple items for assessing perceptions of school problems will be used. This study is also unique because the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems are highlighted.
Specifically, the severity of discipline-related school problems are described from the new teacher perspective. An examination of the impact of school factors on the severity of these problems is conducted. Finally, the nature of the relationship between teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems and their professional satisfaction is determined.

Definitions

An abundance of research on issues related to school discipline exists. However, agreement has not been reached concerning a definition of discipline. For instance, disruptive behavior has been referred to as a behavior short of physical violence, which interferes with the teaching process (Laslett, 1977), as some deviancy that upsets the classroom (Dierenfield, 1982), and as nonsuspendable, annoying behaviors (McClendon-Royster, 1990). In addition, the studies use discipline, classroom management, misbehavior, and disruptive behavior interchangeably. Certainly, discipline and disruptive behavior affect classroom management, but it is difficult to know what is meant by disruptive behavior. For this reason, discipline-related school problems have been defined to encompass students' behaviors that affect discipline within a school. School problems are carefully defined so conclusions can be drawn about new teachers' perceptions of discipline related school problems.

In this study discipline-related school problems include attendance problems, physical conflicts among students, verbal abuse, disrespect for teachers, physical attacks, and threats against teachers. The evolution of these discipline-related school
problems is examined through the lens of the new teacher, school factors associated with these discipline issues are described, and the relationship between discipline-related school problems and teacher professional satisfaction is determined. This longitudinal study is different from many others because it looks at the trend of discipline-related school problems from the new teacher perspective.

For the purpose of this study the following definitions are used:

Discipline: treatment of misbehavior in classrooms or schools (Doyle, 1986).

Misbehavior: any behavior by one or more students that is perceived by the teacher to initiate action that threatens the primary action in a classroom activity (Doyle, 1986).

Classroom Management: actions or strategies teachers use to solve the problem of order in classrooms (Doyle, 1986).

Discipline-Related School Problems: attendance, verbal abuse, disrespect, physical conflicts among students, misbehavior interferes with teaching, physical attacks of teachers by students, and threats against teachers by students.


Professional Satisfaction: an affective reaction or an overall feeling about an individual's career (Perie, Baker, & Whitener, 1997).

Conceptual Framework

Three questions about discipline-related school problems are answered using the perspective of the new teacher. Figure 1 outlines the concepts that are examined.
through this study. Question 1 is, "What are the trends of new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems?" This question examines new teachers' perceptions of issues such as attendance, verbal abuse, and physical conflicts. These perceptions are studied from 1987 through 1994.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.
The second question examines school factors associated with discipline-related problems including teacher gender, location, level, size, and minority population. This question is, "Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, size, location, and percentage of minority students?"

The most recent Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data, from the 1993–94 school year is used to draw conclusions about this question.

The third question examines the relationship between new teachers’ professional satisfaction and discipline-related school problems. The items related to school problems included in this question are listed in Chapter III, Table 3. Two SASS items regarding the nature of new teachers’ effort and career decision are used to determine professional satisfaction. The means of the discipline-related school problem variables are used to compare with the satisfaction variables. Again, data taken from the 1993–94 SASS Public School Teacher Survey are used to analyze question 3 because they are the most recent data available.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A particularly important strength of this study is that a nationally conducted representative survey is used to extract data relevant to the research questions. The SASS Public School Teacher Survey used for this study uses multiple items to measure the areas of school problems and professional satisfaction. It allows generalizations to be made across the country related to new teachers’ perceptions, professional satisfaction, and school factors that affect discipline related school problems. This study uses rich data to draw conclusions relevant to teaching.
Another strength of this study is it describes the trend of new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems. Therefore, it contributes to research on the current status of discipline problems as well as builds on the evolution of this type of school problem.

Along with strengths come limitations to research. As previously stated, the Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey will be the instrument for this study. This nationally conducted survey provides rich data on teachers, but the most recent survey results from 1999–2000 will not be available until spring 2001. As a result, the data from this study are not as recent as preferred. Measuring new teachers' perceptions of school problems from 1987–1994 allows us to learn much about what occurs in schools. However, heavy media coverage of school shootings during the late 1990s and an increased national focus on school safety may have greatly affected teachers' perceptions of school problems since 1994.

Although this survey provides rich data on the national level, new teachers' perceptions may have been more complete if interviews, classroom observations, and other sources of information were also collected. The School and Staffing Survey reaches new teachers across the country. However, new teachers may feel uncomfortable responding to questions about discipline issues because they are of nontenured status. Also, the investigator had to select questions most closely related to discipline-related school problems from items provided in the questionnaire.

The information provided by this research study is beneficial to the field of education. It is timely because the study relates to educational issues including
teacher attrition, school violence, student achievement, school factors, and professional satisfaction, among others. It is strong because it uses (a) a longitudinal approach, (b) nationally collected data, and (c) representative data of new teachers in public schools. This study is comprehensive, providing descriptive data of new teachers and discipline-related school problems, and drawing conclusions about professional satisfaction.

Summary

If discipline-related school problems are not addressed, new teachers will continue to leave teaching, disruptive behavior may escalate into violence, and student achievement will decline. The introduction to this study emphasized the connection among discipline-related school problems, new teacher attrition, and school violence. Analysis of discipline-related school problems through the research questions provides a description of the trend of new teachers’ perceptions. It delineates school factors associated with these problems, and identifies a possible relationship between the problems and professional satisfaction.

This study is unique because it is comprehensive; several school characteristics and their relationship to discipline issues will be examined. Incorporating teachers’ perceptions of misbehavior into this study will expand current research. This is important because student misbehavior can be such that it disrupts learning, but does not warrant office referrals and subsequent suspensions.

The background of the study using related literature is described in Chapter II. The design and methodology for answering the research questions are explained.
in Chapter III. The data gathered are described and analyzed in Chapter IV, and the conclusions and implications are summarized in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

New teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems are examined over a seven-year period in this study. Once these perceptions have been described, the perceptions are compared using characteristics including school size, level, location, teacher gender, and percentage of minority students. Lastly, the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems and their professional satisfaction is examined.

Relevant literature in the areas of discipline and classroom management will be reviewed in this chapter. It is organized into five sections: the evolution of misbehavior, the history of research on discipline-related school problems, factors associated with discipline-related school problems, consequences of these problems, and teacher professional satisfaction.

The effective management of school discipline issues is important to the success of teachers and students. New teachers list discipline as a key reason for leaving teaching (Frantz, 1994; Harris, 1998; Lucas, 1997; Slater, 1980; Wells; 1993), and principals report classroom management and discipline as a weakness in many new teachers (Byrd-Rider, 1998; McCullough, 1992). If teachers cannot manage student behaviors then it is likely that they will have less student engagement in the learning process (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994, Wilson, 1996).
In addition to declining student engagement in learning, lack of classroom management skills in teachers contributes to increased violent behavior in youths (Gottfredson, Alkin, Linden, Noel, & Ray, 1992). School violence has become an issue in recent years as reflected in statistics from the Justice Department. For example, in 1996 middle school and high school age students were victims of approximately 225,000 incidents of serious violent crime at school, and from 1992–1996 teachers were victims of about 316,000 nonfatal crimes at school (Capozzoli & McVey, 2000). Educators in state departments of education are striving to make schools a safe place to learn, and additional research in this area will assist in planning school safety programs. Expanding the research on classroom management and discipline to include new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems will also better prepare teachers for today's schools.

The Evolution of Student Misbehavior

Although the public is mainly concerned with school safety centered on violence and crime, teachers and administrators are also concerned with misbehavior. Common instances of misbehavior are tardiness, cutting classes, inattentiveness, talking, and verbal and physical aggression. Misbehavior is student behavior that is perceived by the teacher to initiate an action that competes with the primary action in a classroom activity (Doyle, 1986). The level or amount of misbehavior is difficult to measure because it is subjective. Teachers' perceptions, the time of day, nature of activity, and reputation of the student often play into the type of teacher intervention.
Student misbehavior is not new in schools, but there is some question about how the current magnitude of such problems compares with previous years. The evolution of misbehavior should be understood before considering current perceptions. However, the evolution is not easily described for three reasons: (1) available data are typically incomplete, (b) perceptions of what constitutes misbehavior vary, and (c) little historical investigation of discipline problems has been undertaken (Doyle, 1978). Still, some insight into the evolution of discipline problems over the years will be provided through study.

During the 1970s researchers concluded that the level of violence, intimidation, vandalism, and criminal activity was significant. There was evidence from Gallup polls and other sources then that crime and school safety was a concern of the citizens (Doyle, 1978). School safety is still a concern of citizens today, perhaps more so because of media coverage of violent acts in schools (Dohrn, 1997; Gable & VanAcker, 2000; Kopka, 1997). However, discipline problems have not always been a concern.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the problems facing schools were with organization such as securing a financial base, procuring competent school board members, and dealing with an overcrowded curriculum (Doyle, 1978). In fact, researchers were more concerned with how teachers were victimizing students, than vice versa. The sentiment was that school structure and expectations were too rigid for students. Schools at the time were quite crowded, with class sizes of up to 75 students. Students within a particular class represented different backgrounds, ages,
abilities, and languages. Characteristics such as diversity in age and ability were similar across urban and rural schools. Teachers handled this diversity with strict discipline. Perhaps as a result of this discipline, along with other societal factors, absenteeism was also extremely high during the turn of the 20th century.

Discipline-related school problems have become more obvious in schools since the 1900s. This is due to the fact that enrollments have steadily increased, with more students staying in school to graduation. In fact, school has become the occupation of youth (Doyle, 1978). Walter Doyle (1978) concluded that student behavior was no worse during the 1970s than in the 1890s. He determined that as more youth enrolled in school, the locus of the misbehavior was moved from the streets to the schools.

Since the 1980s, teachers' perceptions of student misbehavior are that discipline-related school problems have increased (Washington, 1986). It was teachers' opinion that schools were less safe in 1993–94 than they were in 1987–88 or in 1990–91 (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). Teachers perceived that physical conflicts among students and weapons possessions as either moderate or serious problems in their schools had increased from 26% to 40% during this time period.

Although teachers perceive the problems to be growing, U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice (1999) determined that students in school today are less likely to be victimized than in previous years. The crime rate for students, ages 12 to 18, has actually declined since 1993. Kaufman et al. (2000) noted that between 1995 and 1999 the percentage of students who reported being
victims of crime at school decreased from 10% to 8%. Specifically, there was a
decrease in the percentage of students who carried a weapon, and in the percentage
of students who engaged in a physical fight on school property. Also of importance is
that the vast majority of crimes reported by public schools were of the less serious
violent or nonviolent type including physical attack, theft, or vandalism.

An historical study conducted by Barbara Lee Johnson (1999) revealed that
four factors have affected the actual incidents of violence in schools and the
perceptions of violence. First, she found that previous disciplinary methods, such as
corporal punishment, are now viewed as forms of violence. The second factor that
has affected perceptions of violence is compulsory attendance laws. Students are
now together for longer periods of time, and educators are more limited in dealing
with disruptive students. Thirdly, the media sensationalizes negative reports and rare
events, which further distorts the image of schools as safe havens. Finally, the
proliferation of guns in society has complicated the issue of school safety. These four
factors are important to consider in the evolution of school violence.

Although there is not a wealth of historical data concerning the severity of
discipline problems, discipline-related school problems have certainly increased since
the beginning of the 20th century. It appears that as students have begun to remain in
school longer, misbehavior has become more noticeable. It is interesting to note that
while teachers' perceptions are that discipline-related school problems have become
more severe, other reports show that school crime has decreased (Kaufman et al.,
The severity of discipline-related school problems are measured longitudinally in this study. In particular, multiple items related to misbehavior including (a) tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts, (e) verbal abuse, (f) disrespect are considered, and (g) the level of misbehavior interferes with teaching. Thus, it is be more comprehensive than other studies.

Tardiness, absenteeism, and cutting class are all issues of attendance. Attendance issues have been a problem for schools since the turn of the twentieth century. Teachers’ strict use of discipline coupled with lack of truancy laws, allowed students the freedom to be absent from school (Doyle, 1978). Once students were required by law to attend school, enrollment rates increased and student misbehavior increased as well (Doyle, 1978). Feldhusen (1978) reported that one of the pervasive problems in secondary schools was a high rate of absenteeism or truancy.

Birman and Natriello (1978) determined that school administrators see absenteeism as their major discipline problem. High rates of absenteeism and tardiness are cited as one cause of the decline in SAT scores (Birman & Natriello, 1978). In 1985 urban and suburban teachers reported student absenteeism as their greatest concern (Chance, 1985). Tucker (1998) reported that disruptive students were found to have a high rate of absenteeism, suggesting a direct correlation between the two. Black (1996) reported that high truancy rates are proportional to high daytime crime rates. Thus, it is clear that attendance issues have traditionally been a concern for educators.
Attendance issues are also a problem for younger students. According to Black (1996), truancy patterns develop in children as early as kindergarten. Some of these children are kept home from school to care for a younger sibling or because they do not have proper clothes for school. Absenteeism has been found to have a direct, negative effect on student achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment potential (At-Risk Youth in Crisis, 1991).

Another discipline-related school problem, physical conflicts among students, will be described in this study. Teachers list physical conflict among students as the most severe problem in urban schools. Both elementary and secondary teachers are almost equally concerned about these physical conflicts (Shen, 1997a). In fact, between 1987 and 1991 the percentage of public school secondary teachers reporting physical conflicts among students as either moderate or serious problems increased from 26% to 30% (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). Initially in 1987 teachers considered verbal abuse of teachers and student drug and alcohol use as serious problems. By 1994 the most severe problems, from the teachers' perspective, was verbal abuse of teachers and physical conflict among students (Shen, 1997a).

Another area that will be considered in this study is verbal abuse of teachers. As previously stated, verbal abuse of teachers has been consistently reported as a serious problem in public schools since 1987 (Shen, 1997a). In another study conducted during the 1980s, urban teachers ranked verbal abuse of teachers as one of the top stressors of their profession (Chance, 1985). In particular, 93% of these
urban teachers reported that verbal or physical violence had been a problem for them (Chance, 1985).

It is interesting to compare perceptions of administrators, counselors, teachers, and students regarding levels of school problems. Ordovensky (1993) reported that more teachers than principals say they have problems with verbal and physical abuse in their schools. Duckworth-Loche (2000) studied secondary schools in Louisiana and also reported differences in these perceptions. The researcher found that all four groups perceived that school problems had remained the same or decreased. However, the groups did not agree on which school problems were most severe. Physical attacks, vandalism, and verbal abuse of teachers were most severe from the administrators’ and counselors’ perceptions. Teachers and students perceived vandalism, verbal abuse, and drug abuse to be the most severe school problems (Duckworth-Loche, 2000).

Student disrespect for teachers is also examined in this study. This is similar to verbal abuse of teachers, but can be displayed in nonverbal ways by refusing to follow directions or ignoring directives. In the 1950s, teachers thought that fighting, stealing, and disrespect for adults were the most serious school problems (Arsulich, 1979). Based on a review of selected literature, Arsulich (1979) determined that physical conflicts, gangs, theft, and vandalism were the most serious school problems during the 1970s. At a high school during the 1992–93 school year, student disrespect for teachers was reported by students and teachers to be among the major discipline problems (Parietti, 1994). Gable and Van Acker (2000) found that the
majority of aggression consists of bullying, verbal or physical threats, and assaults. While it is true that there are more violent problems in schools today, including weapons and physical conflicts among students, disrespect is also a pervasive concern.

A study conducted by Greenlee and Ogletree (1993) examined teachers' attitudes on discipline problems within the Chicago Public Schools. Greenlee and Ogletree reported one of the most frequently occurring discipline problem identified by elementary and secondary teachers was disrespect. Bobbitt and Rohr (1993) used the Schools and Staffing Survey to determine that at least 10% of secondary public school teachers cited absenteeism, disrespect for teachers, and tardiness as serious school problems. It is clear that attendance, physical conflicts, verbal abuse, and disrespect are current discipline-related school problems. Using a longitudinal approach to describe new teachers' perceptions of these problems will allow the researcher to determine whether these discipline-related school problems are increasing or decreasing in severity.

An Historical Perspective on the Management of Discipline-Related School Problems

Misbehavior creates fissures in the process of classroom learning. Specifically, lack of continuity of classroom management procedures is linked to disruptive behavior (Juencke, 1998). Therefore, after reviewing the evolution of misbehavior in public education, it is also necessary to understand the management of these problems. The expectation is that teachers will effectively handle misbehavior
so learning can occur. Misbehavior needs to be studied in conjunction with classroom management because both play a role in teaching and learning.

Insight on effective teacher behavior and management strategies is provided through the existing research. Research on classroom management initially focused on discrete teacher behaviors and gradually became more descriptive of classroom events. In particular, investigators began to study student and teacher behavior, and draw conclusions about the effective management of discipline-related school problems.

Clinical psychologists who focus on helping an individual with behavior problems, and sociologists who have examined the classroom as a workplace, have historically conducted the research on school problems, but they have not accessed data necessarily relevant to teachers (Doyle, 1986). Even in the field of educational research, discipline-related school problems and the management of these problems has received inconsistent attention. In fact, classroom management is included the first *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Gage, 1963) and later largely ignored in the *Second Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Travers, 1973). Prior to the 1970s, research that was conducted in this field focused on specific teacher actions such as explanation, desist technique, movement management, and group alerting (Doyle, 1986; Kounin, 1970).

In several studies conducted during the 1960s, Jacob Kounin drew some conclusions about classroom management. He discovered that although teachers' desist techniques do not make a difference in student behavior there are types of
teacher behavior that do positively impact student behavior. Using videotapes in 50 first and second grade classrooms, he observed teachers’ (a) withitness or awareness of what is going on; (b) overlapping: dealing with more than one issue at a time; (c) transition smoothness: initiating, sustaining, and terminating activities; and (d) programming: providing learning variety. All contribute to the successful management of the classroom (Kounin, 1970).

A major study of elementary classrooms was conducted by Jackson (1968). This qualitative study was conducted in elementary classrooms and consisted of classroom observations and interviews with fifty outstanding teachers in the suburban Chicago area. School administrators determined who the outstanding teachers were based on evaluations and reputation. Jackson determined that there were five rules of order consistent across the classrooms studied: (1) entrance and exit, (2) noise level, (3) preserving privacy, (4) finishing early, and (5) classroom etiquette. Effective teachers had procedures for entering and exiting the classroom. It was important that teachers discuss misbehavior privately with students, instead of calling them out in front of the class. They also communicated routines for what students should do when they completed their work early. These classroom procedures and routines included expectations for how to treat one another. Successful teachers managed each of these areas effectively.

Prior to this study only the attention of students had been measured (paying attention to the teacher), and Jackson proposed considering the involvement of students in learning, which is more difficult to be feigned than attention. He believed
that researchers should focus on the extent to which students are engaged in learning, rather than if students appear to be paying attention. Jackson (1968) proposed three strategies to involve students in learning: adjust the curriculum to make it relevant to students’ lives, alternate group formation by ability and interest, and add novelty to lessons.

Another study from the 1960s that was instrumental in sparking interest in classroom management and discipline is the qualitative study of an urban classroom conducted by Smith and Geoffrey (1968). This study has been referred to as a micro ethnography of the classroom. It offers a full description of a semester in a sixth and seventh grade classroom within an urban school. The classroom teacher, Mr. Geoffrey, describes the process of establishing classroom expectations as (a) grooving the children, or practicing rules and procedures; (b) communicating consequences; (c) being consistent when incidents occur; and (d) injecting drama and humor into lessons.

Interest in the management of discipline-related school problems has increased since the 1970s. Studies began using the classroom management categories that Kounin established to further test its relationship with student achievement, while others focused on extending the work of Jackson and Smith and Geoffrey by studying classroom events and teacher behavior.

Fred Pigge (1978) studied teacher competency. In Pigge’s studies recent teacher education graduates and administrators were surveyed regarding their perceptions of teacher competencies. The results indicated that the most important
teacher competency was the ability to maintain order in the classroom. It is interesting that teachers and administrators agree on the importance of classroom management to the success of the teacher.

The 1980s brought continued inquiry into differences between effective and ineffective classroom managers. Emmer, Evertson, and Anderson (1980) observed 27 third-grade teachers, 6 of whom were first-year teachers, to determine basic principles of classroom management. Teachers were observed extensively during the first 3 weeks of school and then periodically throughout the remainder of the school year. The researchers found that the worst instances of management were by new teachers using individualized instruction. In fact, instructional problems were the result of poor behavior management. The researchers learned that effective classroom managers had clear procedures, smooth transitions between activities, held students accountable for work and behavior, facilitated purposeful activities that led to student success. These qualities are consistent with Kounin's concepts of withitness, transition smoothness, and programming.

Later, Evertson and Emmer (1982) focused their research on classroom management on junior high schools at the beginning of the school year. In this case 51 experienced and new teachers were observed during the first 3 weeks of school. The researchers used classroom narrative records, time use logs, student engagement rates, student data, narrative ratings, and ratings of teacher and student behavior to determine differences between more and less effective managers and beginning of year behaviors. Evertson and Emmer found that more effective managers had explicit
rules and procedures, ignored misbehavior less, kept track of student progress efficiently, clearly communicated expectations, and wasted less time during instruction.

It is important to note that although the successful teachers had less off-task behavior, they were rated as identifying more with student feelings, and smiling and talking more frequently than the other teachers. The effective teachers were also more experienced than the ineffective new teachers. These effective teachers spent considerable time teaching students to follow rules and procedures, while new teachers tended to begin content study more quickly. The conclusion to this study stressed the importance of providing classroom management techniques so new teachers are prepared for discipline issues especially at the beginning of school.

A summary of research provides a useful glance at what has previously been learned in a similar area. A review of 83 studies conducted between 1960 and 1984 regarding new teachers' problems and teacher education by Simon Veenman (1984) revealed that the problem perceived most often was classroom discipline. Other classroom management issues were included as concerns such as dealing with individual differences, dealing with problems of individual students, and organization of class work. The studies reviewed by Veenman used a variety of information gathering devices including checklists, interviews, and survey questions.

Good and Brophy (2000) summarized discipline research and established prerequisites for successful classroom management. The researchers found that successful teachers: (a) earn the respect of their students; (b) are consistent, credible,
and dependable; (c) are responsible for student learning; and (d) value learning and help the students to as well. Good and Brophy also suggest that teachers use a proactive approach to discipline that is preventive, focuses on the class as a group, rather than on individual behaviors, and integrates powerful instructional strategies with classroom management techniques. Teachers who change activities and vary the type of lesson are more able to prevent misbehavior (Lasley, 1989).

Factors Associated With Discipline-Related School Problems

Research has previously shown that new teachers are more likely to leave schools with a higher percentage of new teachers, a higher percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch, and lower salaries (Shen, 1997b). These school characteristics are also important to understanding the problems of discipline-related school problems and professional satisfaction. This study provides a venue to study school characteristics associated with discipline problems.

Since we know that many new teachers leave teaching because of discipline issues, it is crucial to carefully examine factors contributing to discipline-related school problems. Targeting school factors associated with school problems will provide insight into the types of schools with more severe discipline-related school problems. The following school factors: teacher gender, location, level, and size of school, and the percentage of minority students enrolled in the school are described in this study. Current research has demonstrated a connection between school characteristics and discipline-related school problems.
Gender

Teachers' gender may also impact their perceptions of discipline-related school problems. Recent research conclusions support a relationship between teachers' gender and teachers' perceptions of student behavior (Hofmann, 1993; Meyer, 2000; Panko-Stilmock, 1996; Rong, 1996).

Rong (1996) conducted a study on the effects of race and gender on teachers' perception of the social behavior of elementary students, and determined that the interaction of students' and teachers' race and gender does affect teachers' perceptions of student behavior. Rong found that female teachers perceived female students more positively regardless of teachers' race. Furthermore, white female teachers perceived white students more positively, with the perception that white male students behave better than black male students, but black female teachers made no distinction.

Another study that supports differences in perceptions based on teachers' gender was conducted recently in Southeast Michigan. Meyer (2000) studied two urban communities to examine male and female teachers' perceptions of violence. The author found that male middle school teachers indicated more concern about whether the gender of the teacher intervening in a fight or the fighting student affected a teacher's response to the conflict. Female teachers reported more school areas that they perceived to be unsafe or avoided than male teachers (Meyer, 2000).

Although more female teachers reported schools as being unsafe than males (Meyer, 2000), male teachers tended to over-refer students for disciplinary action...
Panko-Stilmock (1996) analyzed data from nine middle level schools during the 1994-95 school year and found that teacher gender does impact the frequency of discipline referral.

**School Level**

Secondary level administrators have been concerned with the rise of antisocial behavior and crime in schools since the 1970s (Feldhusen, 1978). Shen (1997a) concluded that secondary schools are much more violent than elementary schools. In his study of school problems, secondary teachers reported that each problem was more severe than did the elementary teachers. The school problems included physical conflicts among students, robbery, vandalism, student use of alcohol and drugs, possession of weapons, and verbal abuse of teachers.

A report produced by the U.S. Department of Education and The Bureau of Justice Statistics (1999) also supports a relationship between school level and discipline-related school problems. In 1997 middle school and high school students living in urban or suburban areas were more likely to be involved in violent crime at school than were students in rural areas. This report uses nationally representative data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, National Health Interview Survey, and Youth Risk Behavior Survey to summarize safety issues. Violent crimes include serious crimes such as rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault, and simple assault. However, the majority of crimes that occur at school are of the less serious violent or nonviolent type in 1996–97. Less serious or nonviolent crimes include physical attack or fight without a weapon, theft, and vandalism. It seems it is
middle school and high school students who need to be more concerned about violence.

Henke, Choy, Geis, Alt, and Broughman (1997) analyzed teachers’ perceptions of many of the same school problems as this study. Henke et al. used the 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Survey to study teachers’ perceptions of student misbehavior. There were only moderate differences between elementary and secondary teachers in their perceptions of tardiness and absenteeism (Henke et al., 1997). For example, Henke et al. found that only 9.5% of secondary public school teachers, and 7% of elementary public school teachers reported physical conflicts as a serious school problem. Of public elementary school and secondary school teachers: 12.2% of elementary school teachers, and 15.5% of secondary school teachers strongly agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching.

Those teachers in grade kindergarten through Grade 4 report less stress and increased levels of satisfaction than teachers in higher grade levels. Teachers in these elementary grades have a family-like atmosphere with fewer discipline problems (Kiser-Kling, 1995). In addition to teacher gender and school level, other factors may contribute to discipline-related school problems.

School Size

School characteristics such as district size and density do matter to discipline. Feldhusen (1978) reported that large high schools and schools that have large classes seem to suffer from more violence, crime, and vandalism. Research indicates that there is a relationship between school size and school problems (Ciolfi, 1993; Hibbs,
1996; McConnell, 1985; Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). In an issue brief presented by the National Center for Education Statistics the relationship between school size and school problems is supported (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). Schools and Staffing Survey data (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996) from all three rounds of the survey reflects that approximately twice the percentage of elementary teachers in large schools (more than 750 students) reported problems with physical conflicts and weapons possession as did teachers in smaller schools.

Principals of larger high schools have greater problems with major and minor discipline issues than do principals of smaller high schools (Barnes, 1991; Turk, 1997). These principals suspend students at a higher rate than principals of smaller schools (McConnell, 1985). Likewise, junior high/middle school teachers from large schools are more stressed about discipline and school violence than other groups. These teachers with less experience are also stressed about inadequate discipline policy to deal with this school violence (Ituah, 1990).

McPartland, Jordan, Legters, and Balfanz (1997) determined that students feel anonymous when they have no adult to turn to who knows them well and cares about their welfare. These researchers describe how an unsafe, large high school personalized relationships and focused on curriculum to become more successful. Previously this public high school served 2,000 students and had a daily attendance rate of 50% or 60%. In an effort to make this school smaller, six academies were formed with separate entrances and classrooms. Each academy has its own administration and faculty. Discipline is now handled on a much smaller scale. These
efforts helped to personalize the school. Before the effort to make this large high
school smaller, 85% of faculty agreed that the environment was not conducive to
learning. After the changes, only 10% agreed. Attendance is now up to 70% to 80%
daily. These researchers concluded that the size of the school does affect student
behavior.

School Location

Shen (1997a) studied teachers’ perceptions of physical conflicts, robbery,
vandalism, alcohol and drug use, weapons, and verbal abuse of teachers in relation to
school location. Rural was defined as a farming area or small town with a population of
less than 50,000, suburban as a large town on the fringe of a large city, and urban as a
large or mid-sized central city. Shen (1997a) found that the severity of most school
problems increased from rural to suburban to urban schools. Alcohol and drug use
actually decreased from rural to suburban to urban schools. Another interesting finding
is that urban teachers perceived physical conflicts among students to be most serious,
while rural teachers rated alcohol use as the most serious school problem. Terrill and
Mark (2000) also found that education majors expect greater discipline problems in
urban settings. It appears that location of school can affect the types of school problems
faced by students.

A study of urban schools conducted by Griffin (1996) determined differences
between exemplary and developing elementary schools. Schools were considered
exemplary if recent test scores indicated a positive increase. Conversely, developing
schools showed a decrease in test scores. Exemplary schools had received Summary or
Interim accreditation status based on the Michigan State Department of Education. This status indicates that these schools were making satisfactory progress on the Michigan Education Assessment Program. The investigator also relied on the Director of Elementary Schools for the district to determine which schools were exemplary and developing. All schools included in this study were urban schools. Since some were exemplary while others were developing, the conclusion may be drawn that location does not necessarily matter.

Griffin (1996) determined whether there were common characteristics of exemplary and developing urban elementary schools. Relevant to this study, the investigator concluded that exemplary schools placed a greater emphasis on discipline than developing schools. For example, school staff focused on consistency, fairness, and a sense of order, which implies more consensus building among staff members. The investigator also refers to significant findings regarding leadership style. Leaders of exemplary schools tended to demonstrate facilitative leadership, providing support and encouragement for professional development of staff. This is especially important to teachers’ professional satisfaction, which will be explained in further detail later in this chapter.

An effective schools study completed by Stedman (1987) determined that discipline and time-on-task contributes to urban school success. Specifically, smaller school size and individualized attention were associated with effective rural schools. He found smaller class size and teacher satisfaction produced success in urban
schools. These studies demonstrate a possible connection between school characteristics such as size, level, and location, and effectiveness.

**Percentage of Minority Students**

Although a relationship between the percentage of minority students and severity of discipline problems is not clear-cut, research has documented the inequity in disciplinary action taken against minority students (Johnson, 1989; Panko-Stilmock, 1996; Townsend, 2000; Wimberley, 1993). In a study of nine middle level schools in the Midwest, Panko-Stilmock (1996) reported that minority students are overrepresented in disciplinary referrals by nearly 50%. Townsend (2000) also refers to a 1993 national survey showing that African American males were suspended over three times their percentage in the population.

In a study of disciplinary suspensions in Florida high schools, Ciolfi (1993) found that blacks were suspended more frequently than other ethnic groups in small and medium-size schools, and white suspensions were significant in larger schools. Even referrals of minorities to the principal’s office occur at rates higher than other ethnic groups. These students are most frequently referred for failure to follow directions and physical conflicts with other students (Wimberley, 1993). Teachers’ perceptions of minorities as being lackadaisical, violent, and unmotivated perpetuates the inequitable treatment of these student groups (Terrill & Mark, 2000).

On the other hand, Hunter (1991) examined major discipline problems in middle schools and determined that the racial composition of the schools did not affect the severity of discipline problems. The schools surveyed contained Grades 6
through 8. Schools classified as predominantly black, predominantly white, or racially balanced all had the same types of discipline problems. Thus, the connection between percentage of minority students and severity of discipline-related school problems is questionable.

Clearly, there is a relationship between school characteristics and discipline issues. Although not definitive, the severity of discipline-related school problems is affected by teacher gender, the location, level, and size of the school. Contrary to the purpose of this study, many of the previous studies conducted were not designed to examine more than one or two factors associated with discipline issues, and tended to look at office referrals or suspensions.

Consequences of Discipline-Related School Problems

Achievement

School problems related to discipline are of concern to teachers because the instructional process is often neglected in order to handle student behavior (Culberson, 1999; Washington, 1986). It is obvious that if less time is spent teaching, less learning is likely to occur. In fact, one of the characteristics of successful schools is an orderly and disciplined environment (Wang et al., 1993).

Teachers' ability to establish effective classroom management is important for classroom control and student learning (Culberson, 1999; Good & Brophy, 2000). Morrow, Mandel, Woo, and Pressley (1999) studied experienced literacy teachers and discovered exemplary teachers were aware of classroom behaviors and were pro-
active when dealing with incidents that could escalate into serious discipline issues. Rules were developed with student input and procedures were practiced. These teachers also demonstrated consistent management techniques and followed routines so students knew what to expect each day (Morrow et al., 1999). These effective management behaviors were integral to the success of the instructional strategies used in a literacy classroom.

A similar study conducted by Taylor (1999) highlighted behaviors of “most accomplished” teachers. They found that these teachers kept approximately 96% of their students involved in the classroom activities. Accomplished teachers were found to have routines and procedures for dealing with behavior incidents quickly and effectively. Research supports the idea that classroom management of discipline-related school problems is important to the success of teachers and the involvement of students in learning.

Wang et al. (1994) conducted a meta-analysis of the research on influences on learning and found that within classroom instruction and climate, classroom management was the most influential category on student learning. Classroom management included the areas of group alerting, learner accountability, smoother transitions, and withitness. Group alerting refers to techniques for signaling and maintaining students’ attention. Another area of classroom management is holding students accountable for material and behavior learned. It is also important to make smooth transitions from one activity to another, especially when students are working in small groups. Finally, the term withitness originated with Kounin (1970). This
refers to teachers' ability to conduct multiple tasks in the learning environment while also aware of student behavior. The authors concluded that good classroom management increases student involvement, decreases disruptions, and improves the use of instructional time (Wang et al., 1994).

**Attrition**

In addition to affecting student achievement, ineffective management of discipline issues also leads to new teacher attrition (Crum-Mack, 1993; Frantz, 1994; Harris, 1998; Jackson, 1987; Lucas, 1997; Slater, 1980; Wells, 1993). This is indeed disturbing at a time when schools need certified teachers due to pending retirements of experienced personnel.

A descriptive study by Truog (1998) surveyed principals about their perspectives of first-year teachers' competencies. The 255 respondents represented elementary, middle or junior high schools, and secondary schools from large urban districts to small districts. Nearly one out of five principals reported that classroom management is the beginning teachers' competency of greatest concern. Discipline was also perceived as a problem for new teachers when dealing with diversity, technology, and instructional strategies. The problem of discipline must be addressed in order to have effective instruction in the classroom.

Corley (1998) provides another perspective on new teacher attrition through a one-year qualitative study of new teachers to examine discipline problems, among other issues. Each teacher involved in the in-depth study perceived discipline to be a problem and was uncomfortable in their role as disciplinarian. Unfortunately, an
inability to handle discipline led to the dismissal of one of the first-year teachers in the study. If that first-year teacher had been better prepared to handle classroom behavior, he would likely have remained in teaching and improved.

Not all research supports the idea that attrition is a problem with only beginning teachers. Marlow, Inman, and Betancourt-Smith (1997) conducted a study in Louisiana using the Marlow-Hierlmeier Teacher Profile to look at the career stability of teachers with less than 10 years' experience. Prior research was used to develop a profile of the teacher most likely to leave the profession including: (a) works under a principal who stifles creativity, (b) has dissimilar ideas about teaching as colleagues, and (c) believes the professional status of teachers has deteriorated. The 227 teachers that participated were not predisposed to leave teaching. Although the majority of the teachers felt the professional prestige of education has worsened over the years, most worked for principals that supported creativity and shared pupil ideology with their colleagues.

Beginning teachers with classroom discipline problems are more likely to leave the profession than teachers with other instructional problems (Crow, 1991; Mrozik, 1993). Mrozik (1993) found that excessive stress was a major cause of teacher attrition. Teachers listed overloaded teaching schedules, lack of administrative support, conflicts with administration, large class size, discipline problems and inadequate compensation as work-related reasons for leaving teaching (Mrozik, 1993). Crow (1991) used a case study involving observation, interview, and shadowing of a first-year teacher to investigate factors that contribute to discipline
problems for new teachers. This case study may not be generalized to the population of new teachers, but the in-depth description illustrates the development of one first-year teacher. Crow revealed a teacher who lacked experience with classroom management techniques during student teaching, and therefore did not have a plan for dealing with disruptive behavior during her first year of teaching.

More comprehensive research also supports further study of teachers' perceptions of discipline issues. Shen (1997b) studied three groups of teachers: those who stayed in the same school, moved to another school, or left teaching. He used the 1990–1991 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the 1992 Teacher Follow-up Survey (weighted N = 2,404,592) to determine if the three groups of teachers—stayers, movers, and leavers—differed on personal characteristics, school characteristics, and their perceptions of school and professional issues. Interestingly, the results show that leavers and movers taught in schools with more new teachers, minority students, and students receiving free lunches. The findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that experienced teachers with higher salaries stay in teaching.

School Culture

Failure to address discipline-related school problems can affect student achievement and teacher attrition, and can develop into violent acts within schools. Tobin and Sugai (1999) conducted a longitudinal study of discipline referrals and discovered students exhibiting violent behavior such as fighting in sixth grade had similar behavior in eighth grade. The frequency of referrals in sixth grade predicted
further discipline problems and suspensions later in school (Tobin & Sugai, 1999). Behaviors such as attendance problems, physical conflicts, and verbal abuse, are symptoms of potentially violent acts, and will be described in this study.

O'Toole (2000) studied school dynamics and their contribution to school violence from the student’s perspective. She found seven dynamics that affect students: (1) attachment to school, (2) tolerance for disrespectful behavior, (3) inequitable discipline, (4) inflexible culture, (5) pecking order among students, (6) code of silence, and (7) unsupervised computer access.

If a student becomes detached from other students, teachers, and activities, it may be a sign of potential violence. Schools should prevent and punish disrespectful behavior to promote a more positive school culture. The third dynamic, inequitable discipline, means that discipline should be equitably applied to students and staff. Rather than an inflexible culture, the culture of the school should be yielding, and sensitive to the needs of students and staff. The fifth dynamic, pecking order, calls for school officials to be careful that certain groups of students are not given more respect than other groups. The staff should value all student groups. The next dynamic, the code of silence, refers to students’ refusal to tell teachers or administrators if they are concerned about another student’s behavior or attitudes. School officials need to promote a more trusting atmosphere. The final dynamic, unsupervised computer access, is important so students are unable to explore inappropriate web sites. These seven dynamics contribute to a school culture that promotes violence from the student’s perspective.
According to Bemak and Keys (2000), certain school factors contribute to violent behavior. Narrow hallways within schools and the overcrowding of classrooms may lead to aggressive behavior. They also refer to students with learning problems as prime for violent behavior. Finally, rigid, punitive school rules developed without student input may contribute to feelings of anger and resentment (Townsend, 2000). The authors assert that this pent up resentment can lead to violence (Bemak & Keys, 2000; Townsend, 2000).

Rossi and Daugherty (1996) produced a brief for the National Center of Education Statistics using Schools and Staffing Survey data from 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 examined teachers' perceptions of physical conflicts among students and weapons possession. Teachers were provided with the following response choices: “Not a problem,” “Minor,” “Moderate,” or “Serious.” Between Round 1 and Round 3 of the SASS, public secondary school teachers reporting that physical conflicts among students as either moderate or serious problems, increased from 30% to almost 40%. This school problem is also considered to be moderate or serious by approximately 30% of public elementary school teachers (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996).

The consequences of school problems include teacher attrition, lower student achievement, and the deterioration of school culture. This study will increase awareness of the severity of school problems to combat the consequences. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of these problems from the teachers’ perspective will be provided by this study.
School Violence

Recent school shootings resulting in multiple deaths have shocked the nation into believing that schools are unsafe (Dwyer et al., 2000). Many of these tragedies including those in West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; and Santee, California occurred in rural and suburban schools. These were schools that the public perceived as being safe havens tucked away from the inner city. Unfortunately, incidents such as these are not a new phenomenon. In 1974 a student brought guns and bombs to his school, set off the fire alarm, and shot at adults who responded to the alarm (Vossekul, Reddy, & Fein, 2000). The most recent school violence incidents have attracted media attention, which has caused the government to take notice and attempt to eliminate school violence.

Strategies to Eliminate School Violence

The term zero tolerance refers to policies that punish all offenses severely (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). In the 1980s the government began to use zero tolerance policies in the war against drugs. By the early 1990s school boards began using zero tolerance policies for drug possession, gang activity, and school disruption. Under this policy it was mandatory that students be expelled for their offenses. Additional components of zero tolerance type policies include locker searches, metal detectors, law enforcement supervision of students, and school uniforms. In 1994 the federal government made zero tolerance for weapons a national policy with the Gun-Free...
Schools Act that was signed into law. This law requires student expulsion of one calendar year for weapon possession and student referral to the criminal justice system (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The Gun-Free Schools law has served as a cornerstone of other policies as schools began to use zero tolerance for other types of aggression (Schwartz, 1996).

Experts in the area of school discipline, Curwin and Mendler (1999) propose an alternative to zero tolerance called "as tough as necessary." They believe that zero tolerance type policies do more harm than good to students. In fact, Curwin and Mendler (1999) state that "schools should have zero tolerance for the idea of doing anything that treats all students the same" (p. 119). In order to meet the needs of students they call for the establishment of consequences that take into account a wide range of circumstances, something they believe zero tolerance policies fail to do. In support of Curwin and Mendler’s (1999) dislike of zero tolerance policy, Skiba and Peterson (1999) found that schools that use zero tolerance policies are still less safe than those without such policies.

In 1998 the government responded to recent school shootings when President Clinton directed the development of school safety guides. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice worked together to develop "Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools" (Dwyer et al., 1998). This guide explained the nature of school violence, the importance of school-wide planning for prevention programs, and collaboration between school and home in the planning of programs (Dwyer et al., 2000). This guide led to the development of others, such as the "Safe
School Initiative: An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools” (Vossekuil et al., 2000), “The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective” (O’Toole, 2000), and “Indicators of School Crime and Safety” (Kaufman et al., 2000). The guides are designed to describe violence statistics, identify characteristics of troubled youth, and provide strategies for adults to prevent violence.

Other federal initiatives include programs and policies that schools can parallel in their own violence prevention work: (a) providing after-school opportunities for children, (b) eliminating truancy, (c) instituting uniform policies, (d) developing curfews, and (e) supporting community organizations to plan values-based violence prevention (Stetzner, 1999). Schools should also create a school-based safety team to plan for crisis procedures and discuss operational safety (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1998).

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (1998) developed a list of suggestions to improve school safety. An annual school site assessment should be conducted and used to determine safety problems and school climate issues. The safety team should develop strategies and programs to address safety concerns including (a) establish clear behavioral expectations, (b) incorporate positive school activities, (c) control campus access and establish visitor procedures, (d) keep a detailed record of school crime incidents, (e) maintain a relationship with law enforcement authorities, and (f) provide a district hotline for reporting threats. These are steps that can help a school district be proactive in relation to school violence.
However, there is a controversy over whether school violence has increased or decreased over the last few years.

**School Violence Controversy**

School violence has been heavily investigated in recent years resulting in mixed conclusions regarding whether violence is increasing or decreasing in schools. Some researchers have concluded that violence levels have decreased and that the public has misconceptions about school violence (Hyman & Snook, 2000; Kaufman et al., 2000; Martin, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Others have determined that violence is increasing in the schools (Dwyer et al., 2000; Rossi & Daugherty, 1996; Shen, 1997a). These different conclusions make it imperative to carefully examine the variables, statistical analysis, and practical significance of school violence studies.

A study conducted by Shen (1997a) used the Schools and Staffing Survey to examine teachers' perceptions of physical conflicts, theft, drug and alcohol abuse, possession of weapons, vandalism, and verbal abuse of teachers. Between 1987-88 and 1993-94 he found that according to elementary school and secondary school teachers, all school problems increased except for student drug and alcohol abuse. Shen (1997a) also found that the severity of the school problems increased in severity across rural, suburban, and urban schools.

Similar to Shen’s (1997a) study, Rossi and Daugherty (1996) studied the Public School Teacher Survey of the Schools and Staffing Survey to describe teachers' perceptions of school problems. In this study, however, the variables were physical conflicts and weapons possession. Rossi and Daugherty (1996) determined
that increasing percentages of teachers in elementary and secondary schools reported physical conflicts as moderately serious problems in their schools. Teachers from schools with more than 750 students reported physical conflicts and weapons possession were more serious school problems than teachers from schools with less than 150 students. The effect size of the analysis was not included in the study in order to determine the practical significance of the findings.

In an article by Dwyer et al. (2000) on creating safe schools, it is reported that youth homicide and suicide rates increased dramatically between 1950 and 1993. The authors state that homicide and suicide are the leading cause of death of young people. They referred to the 1998 Annual Report on School Safety, which found that while in-school fatalities have decreased since 1992–93, multiple-victim homicides at school have increased.

It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about school violence without an understanding of the variables, data analysis, and practical significance of various studies. Thus, the school problems will be carefully explained in this study. The data analysis will include descriptive statistics so readers can determine the severity of the school problems. Once the statistical significance is described, the effect sizes will also be calculated to determine the practical significance of the findings.

Teacher Professional Satisfaction

Professional satisfaction is an affective reaction or an overall feeling about an individual’s career (Perie et al., 1997). Teacher satisfaction may have implications for student achievement. If teachers are unhappy with their work, they are less likely to
provide quality instruction to their students. Dissatisfied teachers are also more likely to change schools, further disrupting the learning environment. Although some teachers leave the profession for pregnancy and child rearing, 20% of the public school teachers who leave do so because they are dissatisfied, they wanted to pursue other opportunities, or for better salary (Perie et al., 1997). The connection between professional satisfaction, student achievement, and attrition necessitates good understanding of the causes of teacher dissatisfaction.

Henke et al. (1997) used the Teacher Follow-Up Survey, also sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics, to study teacher satisfaction. They compared the satisfaction of teachers who remained in the classroom and those who left teaching and were employed elsewhere in 1994-95. Overall, 78% of those who remained in the classroom expressed they were satisfied with their working conditions. Sixty-three percent of teachers were satisfied with the manageability of their work. Teachers who left teaching for other occupations after the 1993–94 school year were more satisfied with their new positions. For example, 81% of former teachers who became professionals in other fields were satisfied with their work. Of the former teachers who continued to work in education in a nonteaching capacity, 93% reported satisfaction in 1994–95.

Previous research indicates that there are essentially two factors associated with teacher satisfaction: extrinsic factors and intrinsic factors. Pagano, Weiner, and Rand (1997) studied the satisfaction of new teachers in an urban setting. After two years of teaching, teachers with increased motivation cited their commitment to and
enjoyment of working with young people, and a chance to make a difference by
meeting the needs of students as reasons for their satisfaction. These factors
represent internal or intrinsic reasons for satisfaction. On the other hand, dissatisfied
teachers had decreased motivation. These teachers indicated that lack of
administrative support and student disrespect for teachers were causes of their
dissatisfaction. Mrozik (1993) also found that lack of administrative support,
conflicts with administration, and discipline problems were all factors that
contributed to teachers' decision to leave teaching. These represent external or
extrinsic reasons for satisfaction. Further examples of extrinsic and intrinsic factors
related to teacher professional satisfaction are described in the following section.

Extrinsic Factors

The extrinsic factors that affect teacher satisfaction are usually beyond
teachers' control. The professional status and image of teaching is a factor that
causes dissatisfaction for many teachers (Scott, Cox, & Dinham, 1998). The public
often views teaching as a career with great benefits, hours, and vacations without
recognition of the immense responsibility of facilitating learning. However, Alt,
Kwon, and Henke (1999) revealed that full-time teachers worked an average of 45
hours a week, although they were required to be at school for only approximately 33
hours each week. Teachers spent the additional hours preparing lessons, grading
assignments, attending meetings, supervising extracurricular activities, and tutoring
individual students.
Another extrinsic factor that affects teacher satisfaction is the organizational culture. Within the organization, administrative support is very important to teachers (Tang & Yeung, 1999; Wiggs, 1998). Administrators who use a leadership style that empowers teachers will be more effective at maintaining or improving teacher satisfaction (Chance, 1985). By providing meaningful professional development, administrators help teachers perfect their craft (Hoover & Aakhus, 1998). These principals guard teachers' instructional time, with minimal interruptions. They also assist teachers with student discipline and provide opportunities for teacher input in the development of discipline policy (Lumsden, 1998; Ma & MacMillan, 1999). This type of support is also necessary from sources other than the school administrator. Lumsden (1998) found that teachers who receive parental support are also more satisfied.

In a study of what teachers like and dislike about teaching Trotter (1984) found that the most frequently reported dislikes were extrinsic or beyond a teacher's control. More than 400 elementary school, middle school, and secondary school teachers participated in the study. The teacher dislikes in descending order were: (a) paper work, (b) disciplinary problems, (c) salary, (d) lack of parental concern, (e) student apathy, (f) lack of breaks during the day, (g) large class size, (h) ineffective administration, (i) lack of administrative support in discipline, and (j) inadequate supplies.

Certain school factors also extrinsically motivate teachers. As previously stated, one reason they leave the profession is because of compensation (Mrozik,
1993; Pagano et al., 1997). According to Henke et al. (1997) 58% of teachers in 1994–95 were satisfied with their salaries. Teachers tend to remain in a school district if they are being paid relatively well (Theobald, 1990). Theobald (1990) also found that teachers actually remain in economically depressed districts because teacher financial status is higher, than in wealthier districts.

There are other school factors associated with professional satisfaction. On the whole, private school teachers are more satisfied than public school teachers. Elementary teachers are more satisfied with their careers than secondary teachers. Of elementary teachers, a larger proportion of first- through fourth-grade teachers than fifth- through eighth-grade teachers have high levels of satisfaction. Teachers that work in urban areas are less likely to be satisfied than teachers who work in suburban or rural areas. Satisfaction levels are also inversely proportional to the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch at school (Perie et al., 1997).

Intrinsic Factors

Professional competence is a major part of professional satisfaction. Teachers must believe that they are effective in the classroom in order to feel satisfied. Competence has three components. The first component is prerequisite knowledge: teachers need to have the skills necessary to teach in a subject area. The next component of competence is teachers’ belief that they have effective and current instructional strategies. The final key to competence is combining content-area knowledge with effective instructional strategies to enable students to learn (Ma &
MacMillan, 1999). If these components are in place, teachers are likely to feel competent and satisfied with their positions.

Achievement is connected to teacher competence and also part of professional satisfaction. If teachers have a strong knowledge base and effective instructional strategies, students will likely achieve. Therefore, students also play a major role in teachers' professional satisfaction. Many enter teaching because they want to make a difference with children by successfully meeting their academic needs. (Pagano et al., 1997. Therefore, teachers are satisfied when they can facilitate learning and cultivate positive relationships with students (Dinham & Scott, 1997; Scott et al., 1998). Similarly, if students have poor attitudes and behavior problems, their teachers are more likely to be dissatisfied (Lumsden, 1998; Tang & Yeung, 1999; Wiggs, 1998).

Professional satisfaction from the new teachers' perspective will be described in this study. Research on the impact of experience on satisfaction indicates that as teachers gain experience, their satisfaction declines (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). It is important to note that this is true when all other workplace conditions, such as positive relationships with administration, remain constant. The research in this area will be enhanced by defining new teachers' perceptions of school problems and the relationship to professional satisfaction.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

New teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems are examined in this study. First, the trend of new teachers' perceptions is studied over a seven-year period. Second, the perceptions of the seriousness of school problems are compared using the following characteristics: teacher gender, school level, school size, school location, and percentage of minority students enrolled in the school. Third, the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems and teacher satisfaction is examined in this study.

A description of the participants, instrumentation, data analysis, and limitations of this study are included in this chapter. This study is unique for the following reasons: (a) it uses nationally collected representative data, (b) it focuses on a sample of new teachers, (c) it considers perceptions of these new teachers over three rounds of the survey, and (d) the survey uses multiple items for studying school problems.

Research Questions

1. What is the trend of new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems?
2. Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, school size, school location, and percentage of minority students?

3. Are new teachers’ perceptions of school problems related to teacher satisfaction?

The data for this study are extracted from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This survey is conducted every three years; however, inadequate funding prevented the survey in 1996. The most recent SASS was conducted during the 1999-2000 school year, and the data will be available in late summer 2001. Therefore, in an effort to look for a trend in discipline-related school problems in question 1, the public school teacher portion of the SASS is used from 1987-88, 1990-91, and 1993-94. Since the 1993-94 Teacher Survey provides the most comprehensive information regarding school problems, it is used to address research questions 2 and 3.

The survey was selected as the method of data collection because it enabled data to be collected from a geographically diverse sample (Isaac & Michael, 1982). The characteristics of surveys are that they should be (a) systematic—carefully planned and executed, (b) representative—reflecting the population, (c) objective—insuring that the data are explicit, and (d) quantifiable—yielding data that can be expressed numerically (Isaac & Michael, 1982). This chapter will detail how the Schools and Staffing Survey fits these characteristics.
Participants

The population for the SASS Teacher Survey includes regular full-time and part-time teachers assigned to kindergarten through 12th grade. In the fall of each survey year, a list of teachers within sample schools is submitted; sampled teachers are contacted during the second semester of the survey year. Therefore, only teachers who remain at the schools at which they were sampled are considered included in the survey. Between 1 and 20 teachers were selected to participate from each sample school. This is considered stratified random sampling because new and experienced teachers were selected in proportion to the number of teachers of each type from the teacher lists that schools initially completed. New teachers were classified as those in their first, second, or third year of teaching. This study provides the opportunity to learn new teachers' perceptions of the severity of school problems. This is important because new teachers are more likely to have difficulty handling discipline problems, and it contributes to the decision to leave teaching.

However, teacher sample selection differed at each round of the SASS Survey. In round 1 (1987–1988) new and experienced teachers were selected in proportion to the number of teachers of each type within each sample school. A formula was followed to insure that (a) the product of the school’s selection probability and the sampling fraction for teachers within the school was constant within each school stratum, and (b) the mean number of teachers selected from each stratum was equal to an established target number. During the first round, the sample
The purpose of weighting is to adjust for over sampling of certain states, and nonresponse using respondents’ data, among others (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Because this study will examine new teachers’ perceptions of school problems, only the new teacher numbers are reported. Table 1 lists the unweighted and weighted number of public school teachers for each round of the teacher portion of the SASS. In order to approximate the population and adjust it to the actual sample size, relative weights are used in the data analysis.

Weights for teachers were developed in the same general way for each round. In rounds 2 and 3 the weights were the products of six components; in round 1 the last of these components was not used. The components are as follows:
Table 1
Weighted and Unweighted New Teacher Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted</td>
<td>4,611</td>
<td>5,624</td>
<td>6,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted</td>
<td>269,699</td>
<td>271,655</td>
<td>312,924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weights for teachers were developed in the same general way for each round. In rounds 2 and 3 the weights were the products of six components; in round 1 the last of these components was not used. The components are as follows:

1. The basic sampling weight was the inverse of the teacher’s overall selection probability.

2. The sample adjustment factor accounted for circumstances such as mergers, splits, or duplications that affected the school’s probability of selection.

3. The school nonresponse adjustment factor was designed to account for sample teachers from whom acceptable surveys were not received.

4. The frame ratio adjustment factor was used to reduce sampling error by adjusting sample estimates based on counts of teachers in sample schools to match corresponding counts based on data for all schools.

5. The teacher adjustment factor was used to create agreement between estimates of total number of teachers based on the Schools and Teacher Survey questionnaires (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).
Instrumentation

The Schools and Staffing Survey (U.S. Department of Education, 1988, 1994, 1996) is a mail survey of teachers, principals, and district administrators. It is the most comprehensive national survey in the history of American education concerning the school work force (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). (The Schools and Staffing Surveys are in the public domain and may be obtained through the U.S. Department of Education.) As such, the survey has been utilized to study school issues such as teacher attrition, alternative certification, and job satisfaction, among others (Alt et al., 1999; Shen, 1997b, 1998). The Teacher Survey collects data from a sample of classroom teachers in schools sampled in the School Survey. Information is gathered from the nation's teachers about workload, education, experience, perceptions and attitudes toward teaching, compensation, and demographic characteristics. The National Center for Education Statistics intended this information to be used to analyze how these factors affect the teaching profession as well as to make comparisons between new and experienced teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Data on the respondent's attitudes and perceptions about his/her position and teaching in general are represented in the "Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Teaching" section of the Teacher Survey. For the purposes of this study, this particular section of the Teacher Survey will be used to extract data regarding new teachers' perceptions of school problems.

Information from the Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Teaching portion of the Teacher Survey were used in this study. Since its inception, the number of items...
asking teachers to evaluate the seriousness of problems in their school has increased from 13 to 22. The most recent Teacher Survey also added an item on whether the teacher had been physically attacked or threatened by a student. This is indicative of the increased awareness of discipline related school problems. The majority of the school problems survey items used for this study are recorded on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (serious) to 4 (not a problem). For ease of interpretation, this scale is reversed to show increasing seriousness.

Two school problem items, regarding students threatening or attacking teachers require yes or no responses. One item related to professional satisfaction, “I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher” uses the Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The other professional satisfaction survey item, “If you could go back to your college days and start over again, would you become a teacher or not?” is on a scale of 1 (certainly would become a teacher) to 5 (certainly would not become a teacher). This scale is reduced and reversed to 1 (would not become a teacher), 2 (neutral), and 3 (would become a teacher again).

The Schools and Staffing Survey items that are used for the purposes of this study are outlined in Table 2 below. Each research question addresses slightly different items. It is important to note that research question one studies the trend of these school problems. Therefore, the items listed for this question were consistent across the three rounds of the SASS. The items listed for research questions 2 and 3 are taken from the SASS 1993–94, encompassing more school problems.
Table 2
SASS Items Included in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SASS Item</th>
<th>Research Q1</th>
<th>Research Q2</th>
<th>Research Q3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misbehavior interferes with teaching</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been physically attacked by a student?</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you been threatened by a student?</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you become a teacher again?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity and Reliability

The SASS was developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. Measuring information in the field of
education is the main purpose of the NCES. Therefore, one can presume that a system of checks and balances exists to assess the survey’s validity and reliability. An instrument is considered valid if it measures what it was intended to measure, and reliable if it produces consistent results (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). In preparation for each administration of the SASS, steps are taken to produce valid and reliable results. The survey content is reviewed at each round to expand, retain, or delete topics included in the previous survey. This is done to study current concerns and to solidify the survey’s ability for trend analysis in education.

After initial problems with full-time teacher counts and low response rates for certain questions were detected during the 1987–88 survey, not only did the NCES revise the questionnaires, but also obtained endorsement from the American Federation of Teachers. The revised version of the SASS was then field tested during the 1989–90 school year. The NCES staff also conducted interviews of field test respondents to determine difficult areas of the survey. During these interviews teachers were asked to verbalize their thoughts as they completed the survey. According to the NCES, changes made between the first and second round of the survey may cause some overestimates of change between those school years (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Another field test was conducted during the 1991–92 school year to test proposed changes for the 1993–94 survey. The public school teacher sample size was 420 and the response rate was over 96%. This test would include a toll-free number for respondents to use if they had any questions about completing the survey and
reminder postcards for non-respondents. As a result of the field testing, an item regarding whether the teacher had been threatened or physically attacked by a student was added to the perceptions and attitudes section of the Teacher Survey. However, some items were rejected because (a) the response rate was low, (b) feedback indicated that the data could be invalid, (c) collecting the data burdened the respondent, or (d) the information was not needed for education research. Items rejected for the perceptions and attitudes section of the Teacher Survey are the teacher’s perception of how safe his/her school and the surrounding area and whether the respondent had been verbally abused by a student. A similar item about verbal abuse was left in the survey, which allows us to compare new teachers’ perceptions of the severity of verbal abuse of teachers.

In addition to the pretests and interviews, reinterviews are completed at the conclusion of the survey. After each round reinterviews are attempted with approximately 1 in 60 of the total sample or 1,100 teachers. They were completed for more than 70% of the attempted sample. Topics covered in this special interview include certification, experience, current position, future plans, professional development, salary and benefits, Chapter 1 status, and student behavior problems. These topics represent issues of interest in educational research. By gathering information on these issues, the NCES can draw a clear picture of teachers today, draw parallels, and make comparisons across the different rounds of the survey. This extensive revision process speaks to the SASS’s strengths in validity and reliability.
Data Analysis


The dependent variable, school problems, is continuous data on a 1–4 Likert scale. The independent variable is the three rounds of the SASS Public School Teacher Survey. The data come from the 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 SASS Teacher Survey. To summarize the data, the survey items selected were the same across the three rounds. Items included as describing school problems are (a) student tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts among students, and (e) verbal abuse of teachers. ANOVA or $F$ tests will be used to analyze the data related to this question. If there is a difference among the three rounds of the survey, between which years is a significant increase or decrease in the severity of discipline-related school problems is determined. The effect size, as measured by eta-square, is calculated to determine the practical significance of the findings.

Research Question 2: Do new teachers' perceptions of school problems vary by school locale, size, level, and percentage of minority students?

The independent variable is the factors associated with school problems: gender, locale, size, level, and percentage of minority students. These represent nominal data and will be grouped into three levels for each factor. The dependent variable is the new teachers' perceptions of school problems as reported by the 1993–94 SASS Public School Teacher Survey. This question will also include
additional survey items that were not on the previous rounds of the survey. The survey items with continuous data are: (a) student tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts among students, (e) verbal abuse of teachers, (f) student disrespect for teachers, and (g) misbehavior interferes with teaching. Two survey items, (a) “Have you been threatened by a student?” and (b) “Have you been attacked by a student?” use nominal data and are included to address this research question. These items are analyzed using the nonparametric chi-square test. This test is appropriate for survey items that require a yes or no response.

To analyze the data related to the first part of this research question, Analysis of Variance or $F$ tests are used because of multiple groups and continuous data. The second part of the research question is analyzed using chi-square tests because of nominal data. The effect sizes are calculated to determine the magnitude of the relationship. This is done because the large sample size may yield a large $F$ value that is statistically significant, with a very small effect size. If the effect size is close to zero, the significant $F$ value is of little practical significance.

*Research Question 3: Are new teachers' perceptions of school problems related to their professional satisfaction?*

Once again, 1993-94 SASS Public School Teacher Survey data are used to answer this question. The independent variable is new teachers' perceptions of school problems. The independent variables are the discipline-related school problems: (a) tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts, (e) verbal abuse, (f) disrespect, and (g) misbehavior interferes with teaching.
The two survey items used to identify professional satisfaction are: “Would you become a teacher again?” and “I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher.” Both of these items are continuous data. *$F*$ tests are used to measure the relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of school problems and professional satisfaction. The effect sizes are calculated to determine the practical significance of the findings.

In summary, the research questions and the selection of the appropriate data analysis methods are outlined in Table 3. The results of the three research questions are reported in Chapter IV.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1: Trend</td>
<td>3 SASS Surveys</td>
<td>School Problems</td>
<td><em>F</em> tests, followed by post-hoc multiple comparisons if statistically significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: School Factors</td>
<td>Teacher gender, locale, size, level, % minority students</td>
<td>1993–94 SASS Teacher Survey</td>
<td><em>F</em> tests, followed by post-hoc multiple comparisons if statistically significant/chi-square tests for nominal data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: Professional Satisfaction</td>
<td>New Teachers’ Perceptions of School Problems</td>
<td>Professional satisfaction</td>
<td><em>F</em> tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Discipline-related school problems were examined from the new teachers’ perspective in this study. An analysis of new public school teachers was completed to determine their perceptions of school problems including tardiness, absenteeism, cutting class, physical conflicts, verbal abuse of teachers, student disrespect for teachers, and whether the level of misbehavior in school interfered with their teaching. The perceptions of teachers in their first three years of teaching were then compared using teacher gender, the level of students teacher teaches, school size, location of the school, and percentage of minority students enrolled in the school. Lastly, the relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems and their professional satisfaction was examined.

Research Questions

1. What is the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems?

2. Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, the level of students the teacher teaches, school size, school location, and percentage of minority students?
3. Are new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems related to teacher satisfaction?

Assumptions of Statistical Tests

The statistical tests used for each question in this study are outlined in Table 4. Certain assumptions had to be met in order to conduct the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for questions 1, 2, and 3. According to Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1994, p. 336), the three primary assumptions underlying ANOVA are: (1) the observations are random and independent samples from the population, (2) the distributions of the populations from which the samples are selected are normal, and (3) the variances of the distributions in the populations are equal.

Table 4

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>10.75***</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>12.1***</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>16.41***</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>73.3***</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>85.07***</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001.
The chi-square test was used in this study for the portion of question 2 that deals with the nominal variables: Have you been physically attacked by a student? Have you been physically attacked by a student in the last twelve months? Have you been threatened by a student? Have you been threatened by a student in the last twelve months?. Chi-square test is a nonparametric test used when the assumptions of parametric tests are not met. This nonparametric test is used with categorical data.

Research Question 1


The first research question was analyzed using one-way analysis of variance. The dependent variable was discipline-related school problems that were consistent across all three survey years: (a) student tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts among students, and (e) verbal abuse of teachers. The independent variable was the three rounds of the SASS Public School Teacher Survey. The variables were recoded to indicate increasing seriousness on a scale of 1 to 4. The means, standard deviations, F values, and effect sizes are displayed in Table 4.

Before describing the statistical results related to question 1, it is important to discuss the practical significance of the findings. One reason for a small p value is a large sample size (N = 16,350). Therefore, in this study it was imperative to calculate the effect sizes. The p values for each variable were significant at the .001 level;
however, the effect sizes, as measured by eta squared, were very small. Thus, the results of this analysis may be more statistically significant than practically significant.

There are statistical differences in new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems across the three survey years. These differences are statistically significant for tardiness, absenteeism, cutting class, physical conflicts among students, and verbal abuse of teachers. In 1993–94 tardiness was more serious ($M = 2.32$) than in 1990–91 ($M = 2.29$) and 1987–88 ($M = 2.24$) ($p = .001$). Similarly, absenteeism was perceived slightly higher in 1993–94 ($M = 2.57$) than in 1990–91 ($M = 2.49$), and 1987–88 ($M = 2.53$) ($p = .001$). Although cutting class dipped in 1990–91 ($M = 1.68$), it was perceived to have increased between 1987–88 ($M = 1.72$) and 1993–94 ($M = 1.77$) ($p = .001$). Physical conflicts among students increased slightly in 1993–94 ($M = 2.29$), as compared to 1987–88 ($M = 2.09$) and 1990–91 ($M = 2.17$) ($p = .001$). In 1993–94 verbal abuse was more serious ($M = 2.24$) than in 1987–88 ($M = 2.04$) and 1990–91 ($M = 2.04$) ($p = .001$). It is clear from looking at the means that the differences between the three survey years are actually quite small.

There is also not a trend of increasing seriousness across the three survey years in tardiness and physical conflicts among students. The perception of new teachers' is that verbal abuse of teachers was stagnant between 1987–88 and 1990–91, and increased only a small amount by 1993–94. The data indicate that the discipline-related school problem seen as most serious to new teachers during this seven-year period is student absenteeism ($M = 2.57$). However, even this most
serious school problem was rated as between moderate (3) and serious (4) on the survey scale. Cutting class was consistently rated as between not a problem (1) and minor (2) by new teachers.


Research Question 2

_Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, school size, school location, and percentage of minority students?_

The independent variable is the factors associated with discipline-related school problems: teacher gender, school level, size, location, and percentage of minority students. The dependent variable is the new teachers’ perceptions of school problems as reported by the 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey.

Research question 2 includes additional items that were not part of the previous surveys. The survey items that use continuous data for research question 2 are: (a) student tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts among students, (e) verbal abuse of teachers, (f) student disrespect for teachers, and (g) the level of misbehavior interferes with my teaching. These items were recoded.
so responses represent increasing severity of discipline-related school problems. An analysis of variance was conducted to analyze these variables. Four additional survey items use nominal data and were included as part of research question 2: (1 Has a student from this school ever physically attacked you?, (2 Has a student from this school physically attacked you in the last twelve months?, (3 Has a student from this school ever threatened to injure you?, (4 Has a student from this school threatened to injure you in the last 12 months? These items were analyzed using chi-square tests.

Teacher Gender

The results of the analysis of variance test for effects of teacher gender on new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems are displayed in Table 5. Small differences were detected between male and female new teachers’ perceptions of school problems. Male new teachers perceived discipline-related school problems to be slightly more severe than female new teachers. In fact, in all but one of the variables investigated using the analysis of variance, males perceived the school problems to be significantly more severe than the females that participated in this survey. Males perceived tardiness ($M = 2.39$) as more serious than females ($M = 2.29$) ($p = .001$). Males also perceived student absenteeism ($M = 2.64$) as a bigger problem than females ($M = 2.55$) ($p = .01$). Cutting class was found to be more serious to males ($M = 2.01$) than females ($M = 1.69$) ($p = .001$). Verbal abuse of teachers was also more severe with males ($M = 2.33$) than with females ($M = 2.21$) ($p < .001$). On the other hand, females perceived physical conflicts ($M = 2.24$) among students to be a more serious problem than males ($M = 2.31$) ($p < .01$). Males felt
that student disrespect of teachers \((M = 2.71)\) was more severe than female teachers \((M = 2.67)\) \((p < .05)\), but there was not a significant difference. Finally, males perceived that student behavior interfered with their teaching \((M = 2.2)\) more than females \((M = 1.93)\) \((p < .001)\).

Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Effects of Gender on New Teachers’ Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Once again, it is necessary to examine the means and effect sizes related to the statistical findings to determine the practical significance of the differences between male and female perceptions. None of the discipline-related school problems were rated as more than one standard deviation away from each other. The
differences between male and female new teachers’ perceptions were so slight that no
strong conclusions can be drawn about the differences between gender.

Although Meyer (2000) concluded that more female teachers reported
schools as being unsafe than males, and Panko-Stilmock (1996) determined that male
teachers tended to refer more students for disciplinary action than females, these
differences between men and women are not supported through the results of this
study.

The next portion of question 2 related to teacher gender was analyzed using
chi-square tests. The results of the chi-square tests for the nominal items are
summarized in Table 6: (a) Has a student from this school ever physically attacked
you?, (b) Has a student from this school physically attacked you in the past twelve
months?, (c) Has a student from this school ever threatened to injure you?, (d) Has a
student from this school threatened to injure you in the past twelve months?

As previously noted males perceived discipline-related school problems to be
slightly more severe than female new teachers. It is not surprising then that male new
teachers have been threatened by students more than female new teachers \( \chi^2(1) =
24.73, p < .001 \). Of the 25.2% of males that had been threatened by a student, 81.6%
had been threatened within the last year. Similarly, of the 19.3% of female new
teachers that had been threatened by a student, 76.8% threats had also occurred
during the last year. There is a statistical relationship between teacher gender and
threats of injury by students. However, the percentages are so close between male
and female new teachers, and the effect size, as measured by eta square, is so small
that no strong conclusions can be made about the relationship between teacher gender and threats of injury by students.

Table 6

Distribution of Physical Attacks and Threats in Relation to Teacher Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Gendera</th>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student attacked you?</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>7.20%</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . in the last 12 months?</td>
<td>81.10%</td>
<td>75.20%</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student threatened you?</td>
<td>25.20%</td>
<td>19.30%</td>
<td>24.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . in the last 12 months?</td>
<td>81.60%</td>
<td>76.80%</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aPercentages represent teachers who responded positively that they had been physically attacked or threatened by a student.

**p < .001

School Level

In the next portion of research question 2 the researcher examined the effects of school level on new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems. The results of the one-way analysis of variance are displayed in Table 7. The Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey from 1993–94 determined that teachers that teach kindergarten through 6th grade were considered elementary teachers, and teachers that teach 7th through 12th grade were considered secondary teachers. The data indicated that new secondary teachers perceive students’ behavior to be slightly more serious than new elementary teachers in all types of discipline-related school
problems analyzed in this study. New teachers did not rate any of the school problems as serious. Disrespect ($M = 2.93$), absenteeism ($M = 2.84$), tardiness ($M = 2.58$), and verbal abuse ($M = 2.54$) were rated as moderate problems. One school problem worth watching in the future is cutting class as the effect size was the largest, and the difference between elementary and secondary new teachers was also large.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Effects of School Level on New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***$p < .001$.

There is a statistical relationship between school level and new teachers' perceptions of tardiness, absenteeism, cutting class, physical conflicts, verbal abuse of teachers, disrespect of teachers, and behavior interferes with teaching. The means for secondary teachers' perceptions were all greater than elementary teachers' perceptions ($p < .001$), but were not more than a standard deviation away from each...
other. The statistical results of this question are consistent with the literature reviewed that found secondary level teachers and administrators are more concerned with school problems than elementary level teachers (Feldhusen, 1978; Henke et al., 1997; Kiser-Kling, 1995; Shen, 1997a). However, the effect sizes from this study are quite small so the results of the analysis have little practical significance.

The researcher also examined the effects of school level on physical attacks on new teachers and threats toward new teachers. This relationship was analyzed using chi-square tests and the results are displayed in Table 8. The elementary level included teachers that teach kindergarten through 6th grade. The secondary level included teachers that teach 7th through 12th grade.

Table 8

Distribution of Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers in Relation to School Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levela</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a student attacked you?</strong></td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>27.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... in the last 12 months?</strong></td>
<td>77.40%</td>
<td>75.90%</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has a student threatened you?</strong></td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
<td>109.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... in the last 12 months?</strong></td>
<td>76.00%</td>
<td>79.80%</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages represent teachers who responded positively that they had been attacked or threatened.

***$p < .001$. 

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The analysis conducted in this study indicates that elementary new teachers are more likely to have been physically attacked by a student than secondary new teachers \( (x^2(1) = 27.22, p < .001) \). Although statistically significant differences were found between elementary and secondary new teachers, the percentages are low, 9% and 5.5% respectively. Therefore, no strong conclusions can be made regarding attacks on elementary and secondary new teachers. The results of this study are similar to another study of public school teachers. According to the Henke et al. (1997) who also studied the 1993–94 Public School Teacher questionnaire of the Schools and Staffing Survey, 12.5% of all elementary teachers had been attacked by a student, compared to only 8.3% of all secondary teachers. The effect size was not available from that particular study.

The data indicate secondary teachers are more likely to have been threatened by a student \( (x^2(1) = 109.78, p < .001) \). The effect size, as measured by eta square, is larger and the difference between elementary and secondary new teachers is larger than 10%. So there is a moderate difference between elementary and secondary new teachers in terms of threats. Most of the threats of injury against secondary teachers occurred within the last year (79.8%).

The results are consistent with previous conclusions that secondary schools are more violent than elementary schools (Shen, 1997a). Henke et al. (1997) reported that 31.7% of all public school secondary teachers had been threatened, and 14.2% of all public school elementary teachers had been threatened by a student. Kiser-Kling (1995) found that teachers in elementary grades have a more family-like atmosphere.
with fewer discipline problems. With the percents of attacks and threats against elementary teachers so low, 9% and 16% respectively, Kiser-Kling’s conclusion can also be supported.

School Size

The third area addressed through research question 2 is school size. The results of the one-way analysis of variance of the effect of school size on new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems are displayed in Table 9. The schools were classified by the National Center for Education Statistics as small if the student enrollment was 1–299, medium if the student enrollment was 300–749, and large if the student enrollment was 750 or larger.

The data indicate that there is a relationship between school size and new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems. Student tardiness, absenteeism, physical conflicts, verbal abuse, disrespect, and behavior interferes with teaching all become more serious between small, medium, and large schools ($p < .001$). After reviewing the effect sizes, as measured by eta square, these statistically significant results have little practical significance. However, the means of small and medium-sized schools are quite similar, while the means of the large schools stand out. New teachers at large schools consistently perceive school problems to be more serious than teachers at small and medium-sized schools. This is a pattern that is worth watching in the future. These findings are consistent with previous research that has concluded that large schools seem to suffer from more discipline issues than smaller schools (Rossi & Daugherty, 1996; Turk, 1997). Students may act out with
Table 9
Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Effects of School Size on New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Small (N = 1-299)</th>
<th>Medium (N = 300-749)</th>
<th>Large (N = 750-1500+)</th>
<th>ANOVA F(2,5636)</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.09 0.89</td>
<td>2.18 0.84</td>
<td>2.62 0.88</td>
<td>184.15***</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.37 0.93</td>
<td>2.42 0.86</td>
<td>2.85 0.86</td>
<td>167.51***</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.54 0.78</td>
<td>1.52 0.72</td>
<td>2.24 0.96</td>
<td>483.62***</td>
<td>.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2 0.82</td>
<td>2.2 0.86</td>
<td>2.53 0.85</td>
<td>144.05***</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.03 0.97</td>
<td>2.14 0.96</td>
<td>2.48 0.95</td>
<td>97.65***</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.49 0.97</td>
<td>2.49 0.95</td>
<td>2.89 0.93</td>
<td>77.42***</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>1.8 0.93</td>
<td>1.83 0.92</td>
<td>2.35 1.05</td>
<td>184.35***</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001.

Students cutting class is slightly less serious at medium-sized schools (M = 1.52) than smaller schools (M = 1.54), but is most severe at large schools (M = 2.24) (p < .001). Student disrespect of teachers is perceived by new teachers to be the most serious discipline-related school problem examined, it was rated as between minor and moderate by all three groups. New teachers perceive students cutting class to be the least serious across small, medium, and large schools, it was rated as (M =...
1.54), ($M = 1.52$), and ($M = 2.24$), respectively. Once again, new teachers did not rate any of the school problems as serious.

The relationship between school size and new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems was also analyzed using chi-square tests. The chi-square results of the effects of school size on new teachers' perceptions of physical attacks and threats against teachers are displayed in Table 10. Although statistical differences were detected between the school sizes, the percents are similar and quite small in terms of attacks and threats. The data indicate that new teachers in medium-sized schools are more likely to be attacked than new teachers in small or large schools ($\chi^2(2) = 7.05, p < .05$). However, when the percents from small, medium, and large schools are examined the differences are so slight that this conclusion has little practical significance.

The chi-square results of threats of injury against new teachers are consistent with previous findings about the relationship of school size and discipline-related school problems. The percentage of teachers who receive threats of injury from students increases from small, medium, to large schools. The difference between small and large schools is 10%, a moderate difference. New teachers in large schools receive more threats of injury from students than new teachers in other school sizes ($\chi^2(2) = 54.2, p < .001$). In the area of threats of injury the results are similar to previous conclusions that larger schools have more problems with discipline (Barnes, 1991; Turk, 1997). These problems in large schools are because students feel anonymous and are less likely to connect with adults in a large setting (McPartland...
Table 10

Distribution of Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers in Relation to School Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Small 1-299</th>
<th>Medium 300-749</th>
<th>Large 750-1500+</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a student attacked you?</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . in the last 12 months?</td>
<td>76.60%</td>
<td>72.90%</td>
<td>79.70%</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student threatened you?</td>
<td>16.50%</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . in the last 12 months?</td>
<td>80.20%</td>
<td>74.60%</td>
<td>81.70%</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percents represent teachers who responded positively that they had been attacked or threatened by a student.

**$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$. et al., 1997). Ituah (1990) also concluded that teachers from large schools are more stressed about discipline and school violence than other groups.

School Location

The relationship between school location and new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems was analyzed using one-way analysis of variance. The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 11. New teachers in all locations reported moderate concern about these school problems, but the differences are not large enough to draw strong conclusions about the relationship between school
location and new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems. A
description of these moderate differences follows.

Table 11
Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
for Effects of School Location on New Teachers’ Perceptions of
Discipline-Related School Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>ANOVA F(2,6115)</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>100.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>52.99***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>37.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>125.48***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>37.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>30.66***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>61.73***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Ratio of between groups sum of squares and total sum of squares.
***p < .001.

Tardiness increased from rural schools ($M = 2.18$) to suburban schools ($M = 2.28$) to urban schools ($M = 2.56$) ($p < .001$). Absenteeism also increased from rural ($M = 2.49$) to suburban ($M = 2.52$) to urban settings ($M = 2.76$) ($p < .001$). Cutting class was perceived to be the same between rural and suburban schools ($M = 1.71$), but was more severe at urban schools ($M = 1.93$) ($p < .001$). Physical conflicts
increased in seriousness between rural ($M = 2.11$), suburban ($M = 2.31$), and urban ($M = 2.53$) schools ($p < .001$). Verbal abuse of teachers was perceived to be more severe in urban schools ($M = 2.41$) than in suburban ($M = 2.2$) and rural schools ($M = 2.16$) ($p < .001$). Disrespect of teachers was also slightly higher in urban schools ($M = 2.83$), than in suburban schools ($M = 2.67$), and rural schools ($M = 2.6$) ($p < .001$). Finally, urban teachers ($M = 2.22$) felt that student behavior interfered with their teaching more than suburban teachers ($M = 1.97$) or rural teachers ($M = 1.88$) ($p < .001$).

The statistical results of this study are consistent with other research conclusions made regarding the relationship between school location and school problems. Shen (1997a) found that the severity of most school problems increased from rural to suburban to urban schools. Although urban schools can be successful as measured by state standardized test scores, their success can hinge on emphasizing discipline issues such as consistency, fairness, and a sense of order (Griffin, 1996). Upon closer examination of the means and effect sizes, strong conclusions cannot be drawn. Also, teachers in rural, suburban, and urban schools did not rate any of the school problems as serious on the survey scale. Most of the problems were considered by new teachers to be minor or moderate problems.

The remainder of the discipline-related school problems examined, physical attacks and threats against teachers, were analyzed using chi-square tests. The results of the chi-square tests for the relationship between school locale and new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems are displayed in Table 12.
Table 12

Distribution of Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers in Relation to School Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a student attacked you?</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>96.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>76.30%</td>
<td>78.80%</td>
<td>76.10%</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27.30%</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
<td>62.87</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... in the last 12 months?</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>81.90%</td>
<td>72.10%</td>
<td>79.00%</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage represents teachers who responded positively that they had been attacked or threatened by a student.

**$p < .05$. ***$p < .001$.  

The data indicate that there is a relationship between school location and attacks and threats against new teachers. New teachers in urban schools are more likely to be physically attacked by their students than teachers in suburban or rural schools ($\chi^2 (2) = 96.28, p < .001$). This represents a statistically significant difference between school locations, but the percents are only slightly different. The effect size is very small so no strong conclusions regarding school location and physical attacks against teachers. There was also no significant relationship between school locale and whether the attack occurred in the past year. Henke et al. (1997) used the Schools and Staffing Survey from 1993–94 to study all public school teachers. They found
that the percentage of teachers who had been attacked by their students increased from rural (8.2%), suburban (10.1%), and urban schools (14.2%). The percentages are quite close, and the effect sizes were not listed in the table.

The percentage of new teachers threatened by their students increases slightly from rural, suburban, and urban schools. New teachers in urban schools are more likely to be threatened by their students than teachers in suburban or rural schools ($\chi^2(2) = 62.87, p < .001$). Of course the effect size, as measured by eta square, is close to zero so this finding has little practical significance. The percentages are very similar between rural and suburban schools, but there is a moderate difference between rural and urban schools, 17.8% and 27.3%, respectively. This is consistent with Henke et al.'s (1997) study of all public school teachers that demonstrated moderate differences between rural and urban schools, 21.9% and 31.7%, respectively.

**Percentage of Minority Students**

The analysis of variance for the effects of percentage of minority students enrolled in school on new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems are displayed in Table 13. The National Center for Education Statistics, in development of the Schools and Staffing Survey divided the minority student enrollment into four groups: (1) 0–4%, (2) 5–19%, (3) 20–49%, and (4) 50–100%. These four levels were also used in this study. Based on the data analysis conducted for this study there is a relationship between the percentage of minority students
enrolled in a school and new teachers' perceptions of the severity of discipline-related school problems \((p < .001)\). However, the effect sizes, as measured by eta square, were all very small. This indicates that the statistical significance has little practical significance.

Table 13

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Effects of Percentage of Minority Students on New Teachers’ Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>0-4%</th>
<th>5-19%</th>
<th>20-49%</th>
<th>50-100%</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001.

Within the seven independent variables related to school problems, schools with the highest percentage of minority students had new teachers perceive the discipline-related school problems to be most serious. New teachers in schools with 50-100% minority students perceived tardiness \((M = 2.59)\), absenteeism \((M = 2.83)\),
cutting class ($M = 2.01$), physical conflicts ($M = 2.66$), verbal abuse ($M = 2.5$),
disrespect ($M = 2.92$), and behavior interferes with teaching ($M = 2.26$) as
significantly more severe than teachers in other schools ($p < .001$).

New teachers in all of the schools perceived student disrespect of teachers to
be the most serious discipline-related school problem. Student disrespect of teachers
was perceived by teachers in schools with 0–4% minority enrollment as between
minor and moderate ($M = 2.46$), schools with 5–19% minority enrollment perceived
disrespect as slightly more moderate ($M = 2.52$), schools with 20–49% minority
enrollment ($M = 2.74$) perceived this to be a moderate problem, and schools with 50–
100% minority enrollment perceived disrespect to be a moderate problem ($M = 2.92$
($p < .001$). Upon examination of the means, new teachers actually have similar
perceptions of disrespect. Therefore, although there appears to be a direct
relationship between percentage of minority students and new teachers' perceptions
of discipline-related school problems, it is a weak relationship.

The school problem that all new teachers perceived to be the least serious was
cutting class. Although teachers from schools with 50–100% minority enrollment
perceived cutting class as more serious ($M = 2.01$), than teachers from schools with
20–49% enrollment ($M = 1.75$), 5–19% minority enrollment ($M = 1.62$), and 0–4% 
minority enrollment ($M = 1.64$) ($p < .001$), it was considered the least serious
discipline-related school problem in this study. All of the schools rated cutting class
as not a problem to a minor problem.
An area worth watching is the differences between schools with 0–19% minority enrollment and schools with 20–100% minority enrollment. Schools with less than 20% minority enrollment perceive school problems to be not a problem or minor. Schools with 20% or higher minority enrollment perceive school problems to be minor or moderate. This is a weak trend that warrants further study.

The effect of percentage of minority students on new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems was also examined using chi-square tests as part of research question 2. The results of these tests are displayed in Table 14. There is also a relationship between physical attacks and threats of injury and the percentage of minority students enrolled in school. The percentages of new teachers attacked from schools with 0–49% minority enrollment are very small, 2.7%, 4.9%, and 5.5%, respectively. The percentage of new teachers attacked from schools with a majority of minority students jumps to 14%. It is important to note that the effect size, as measured by eta squared, is very small.

New teachers in schools with 50–100% enrollment of minority students are physically attacked more than new teachers in schools with lower percentage of minority students \( \chi^2(3) = 172.4, p < .001 \). Of the 14% of new teachers attacked in schools with a majority of minority students, 75.5% occurred in the last 12 months. However, although 5.5% of new teachers are attacked in schools with minority enrollment of 20–49%, 88.6% of the attacks occurred in the last year. Teachers attacked from schools with this level of minority enrollment are more likely to have
Table 14

Distribution of Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers in Relation to Percentage of Minority Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Minority Students</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Eta Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a student attacked you?</td>
<td>0-4%  5-19%  20-49%  50% or more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.70%  4.90%  5.50%  14.00%</td>
<td>172.40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student attacked you?</td>
<td>57.10%  72.30%  88.60%  75.50%</td>
<td>13.22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student threatened you?</td>
<td>14.10%  11.80%  24.80%  29.90%</td>
<td>199.87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a student threatened you?</td>
<td>73.50%  70.30%  81.80%  80.40%</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentage represents teachers who responded positively that they had been attacked or threatened by a student.

**$p < .5$. ***$p < .001$.

been attacked in the last year than other schools ($\chi^2(3) = 13.22, p < .05$). It is encouraging to see how low the percentages are overall.

The data indicate that as the percentage of minority students increases, so does the percentage of new teachers that have been threatened by their students. Again, the effect size is close to zero so the practical significance of the statistical findings is questionable. Teachers in schools with a majority of minority students are more likely to be threatened with injury by their students ($\chi^2(3) = 199.87, p < .001$). The time in which these threats of injury occurred is also consistent with the results related to physical attacks. New teachers in schools with minority enrollment of 20–
49% were more likely to have been threatened in the last year (81.8%) than teachers from schools with different levels of minority enrollment ($\chi^2(3) = 12.24, p < .05$). Therefore, teachers from schools with 50–100% minority enrollment are more likely to be attacked and threatened by their students than teachers from schools with lower levels of minority enrollment ($p < .001$). However, these attacks and threats do not necessarily occur within the last year.

The finding that new teachers in schools with a majority of minority students are physically attacked and threatened with injury at a higher level than teachers in other schools is consistent with previous conclusions regarding the relationship between minority students and discipline-related school problems. Johnson (1989) and Townsend (2000) both agreed that minority students undergo more disciplinary action than other student groups. Wimberley (1993) also found that minorities are referred to the principal’s office more frequently than other ethnic groups. However, the fact that the effect sizes of the analysis are close to zero supports conclusions that school violence is declining (Dwyer et al., 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Research Question 3

*Are new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems related to teacher satisfaction?*

The relationship between teachers’ perceptions of school problems and teacher satisfaction was analyzed using one-way analysis of variance. The data for
this question also came from the 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey. The independent variable is new teachers' perceptions of school problems: (a) tardiness, (b) absenteeism, (c) cutting class, (d) physical conflicts, (e) verbal abuse, (f) disrespect, and (g) the level of misbehavior interferes with my teaching. The independent variables were recoded to indicate increasing seriousness on a Likert scale of 1 through 4.

The dependent variable is teacher satisfaction in terms of the survey items (a) If you could go back to your college days and start over again, would you become a teacher or not?, and (b) I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher. The possible responses for the first satisfaction survey item were grouped to indicate (1) would not become a teacher again, (2) neutral, and (3) would become a teacher again. The second satisfaction survey item, “I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher,” was recoded to (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, and (4) strongly agree. The statistics related to the one-way analysis of variance are displayed in Tables 15 and 16.

Would you become a teacher again?

The new teachers were divided into three groups: (1) would not become a teacher again, (2) neutral, and (3) would become a teacher again. The researcher focused mainly on similarities between Groups 1 and 3, those that would not become a teacher again, and those new teachers that would become a teacher again. There appears to be a relationship between new teachers' perceptions of school problems
Table 15

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Effects of New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems on Teacher Satisfaction

“If you could go back to your college days and start over again, would you become a teacher again?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Would Not (1)</th>
<th>Neutral (2)</th>
<th>Would (3)</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001.

and if they would become a teacher again if given the chance (p < .001). There were some interesting results related to the respective groups’ perceptions of school problems.

First, both groups, teachers who would not become teachers again, and those who would, agreed upon the two school problems that were most severe: disrespect (M = 3.1, M = 2.58), and absenteeism (M = 2.81, M = 2.52), respectively (p < .001). Based on the survey scale these problems were considered moderate. When
Table 16

Means, Standard Deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Effects of New Teachers’ Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems on Teacher Satisfaction

“I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1)</td>
<td>Somewhat Disagree (2)</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree (3)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (4)</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>F(3, 6115)</td>
<td>Eta Squared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Class</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conflicts</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Interferes</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < .001

the mean values were rounded, teachers who would not become teachers again actually perceived verbal abuse and physical conflicts to be the third most severe problems (M = 2.58) and (M = 2.58). The groups also agreed upon the school problem that was the least severe, students cutting class (M = 2.05, M = 1.71) (p < .001), respectively. It is important to note that both groups agreed that none of the

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school problems were rated as serious (4) on the survey scale. The only two school problems that the new teachers who would not become a teacher again and the teachers who would become a teacher again disagreed upon in order of seriousness: tardiness \((M = 2.55, M = 2.26) (p < .001)\), and verbal abuse \((M = 2.58, M = 2.17) (p < .001)\), respectively.

Second, although the two groups agreed upon the school problems that were most severe and least severe, they disagreed on the level of seriousness. Each group responded as one would assume, those who would become teachers again perceived the school problems to be less serious than those teachers who would not become teachers again. In all seven of the school problems examined, new teachers who would not choose to become teachers again felt the school problems tardiness \((M = 2.55)\), absenteeism \((M = 2.81)\), cutting class \((M = 2.05)\), physical conflicts \((M = 2.58)\), verbal abuse \((M = 2.58)\), disrespect \((M = 3.1)\), and behavior interferes with my teaching \((M = 2.30)\) were more serious than the other group. New teachers who would become teachers again perceived tardiness \((M = 2.26)\), absenteeism \((M = 2.52)\), cutting class \((M = 1.71)\), physical conflicts \((M = 2.24)\), verbal abuse \((M = 2.17)\), disrespect \((M = 2.58)\), and behavior interferes with my teaching \((M = 1.92)\) to be less serious \((p < .001)\). This conclusion is not surprising, as one might expect new teachers who would not select teaching as their career again to perceive school problems to be more serious than other groups.

Although statistical significance was determined, the means were less than one standard deviation apart. The effect sizes, as measured by eta squared, were also
very small. This leads the researcher to determine that no strong conclusions can be made regarding the relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of school problems and teacher satisfaction.

*It is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher.*

The scale of this survey item was recoded to indicate (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, and (4) strongly agree. The statistics related to the one-way analysis of variance are displayed in Table 16. The F-test results indicated statistically significant differences for the four groups. The multiple comparison indicated a consistent pattern for where the differences are between the groups: those teachers who strongly agree that it is a waste of time to try to do their best perceive school problems to be the worst. There is a relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of school problems and if they feel it is a waste of time to try to do their best as a teacher (*p* < .001). However, the differences between the means of the four groups are quite small. The effect sizes, as measured by eta squared, are close to zero. This leads the researcher to conclude that although statistical differences were detected, no strong conclusions can be made.

Once again the new teachers’ who were at opposite ends of the scale agreed on the two most severe school problems. Teachers who strongly disagreed that it is a waste of time to try to do their best, perceived disrespect (*M* = 2.45) and absenteeism (*M* = 2.41) to be the top two school problems. Teachers who strongly agreed that it is a waste of time to try to do their best as a teacher also perceived disrespect (*M* = 3.16) and absenteeism (*M* = 2.89) as the most severe school problems.
problems. According to the survey scale, disrespect and absenteeism were considered moderate problems by both groups. These groups also agreed that cutting class was the least severe or minor school problem ($M = 1.62$) and ($M = 2.09$), respectively.

Similar to the first survey question related to teacher satisfaction, the results of this analysis also indicate that new teachers who feel it is a waste of time to try to do their best as teachers also perceive school problems to be more serious than the other groups. Teachers who strongly agree that it is a waste of time to try their best perceived tardiness ($M = 2.70$), absenteeism ($M = 2.89$), cutting class ($M = 2.09$), physical conflicts ($M = 2.59$), verbal abuse ($M = 2.65$), disrespect ($M = 3.16$), and behavior interferes with my teaching ($M = 2.53$) to be more serious than teachers who strongly disagree that it is a waste of their time to try their best as a teacher ($p < .001$). Teachers who do not feel they are wasting their time perceived tardiness ($M = 2.15$), absenteeism ($M = 2.41$), cutting class ($M = 1.62$), physical conflicts ($M = 2.16$), verbal abuse ($M = 2.03$), disrespect ($M = 2.45$), and behavior interferes with my teaching ($M = 1.76$) to all be less serious school problems ($p < .001$). Although the groups generally agree upon the school problems that are the most severe, they differ on the level of seriousness of these school problems. It is also important to notice how close the means are between the two groups.

Therefore, although there is a statistical relationship between teachers’ perceptions of school problems and the survey items related to teacher satisfaction, no strong conclusions can be made regarding the relationship because of the similarity in means and small effect sizes.
Summary

Although significant statistical differences were found in new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems, no strong conclusions can be made. First, statistically significant differences were found in the trend of new teachers' perceptions of school problems across three survey years. However, the means from 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 are very similar; they are less than one standard deviation away from each other. The effect size was calculated using eta squared to determine the practical significance of the statistical findings. The effect sizes were all close to zero; therefore, the differences between the survey years are too small to draw conclusions about the trend in new teachers' perceptions of discipline related school problems.

It was also found that new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems vary by teacher gender, school level, school location, and percentage of minority students enrolled. Once again, statistically significant differences were found in each factor. The effect sizes, as measured by eta squared, were consistently very small. The differences in the means and percentages were also very small. Thus, the statistically significant differences have little practical significance in education.

Finally, it was determined that no strong conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of school problems and teacher satisfaction. Through the data analysis it appeared that teachers who perceive discipline-related school problems to be more serious are less likely to choose to become teachers again. However, as indicated in Table 16, even those new teachers who would not become teachers again
perceived the school problems in this study to be less than serious on the survey scale.

Examination of the means of those who would, and those who would not become teachers again revealed that they were less than one standard deviation point away from each other.

There also appeared to be a negative relationship between new teachers' perceptions of school problems and the extent to which they feel it is a waste of time to try to do their best as teachers. This is reflective of research on teacher satisfaction done by Pagano et al. (1997), who found teachers with decreased levels of motivation after two years of teaching listed student disrespect for teachers as a main cause of their dissatisfaction. New teachers in this study also listed student disrespect for teachers as the most severe school problem. The differences in the means were also very small, and the effect sizes were close to zero. Thus, no strong conclusions can be made regarding the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems and teacher satisfaction.

The results of this study were reported in this chapter. The findings were also discussed in relation to previous literature reviewed in Chapter II. A summary of the findings was also included in this chapter. Conclusions and implications of this study as well as recommendations for future research are included in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of this study of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems. The conclusions are consistent with and challenge previous research findings related to school problems. Implications of the conclusions are discussed and recommendations are made for future research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine discipline-related school problems from the new teacher perspective. The Public School Teacher Survey of the Schools and Staffing Survey from 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 were used to study the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems over that seven-year period. The most recent survey data available, the 1993–94 Public School Teacher Survey were used to examine new teachers’ perceptions of school problems in relation to several factors including (a) teacher gender, (b) school level, (c) school size, (d) school location, and (e) the percentage of minority students enrolled in school. Finally, the 1993–94 Public School Teacher Survey data were used to draw conclusions about the relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems and teacher satisfaction.

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Specifically, the following research questions were answered through completion of this study:

1. What is the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems?

2. Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender, the level of students the teacher teaches, school size, the location of the school, and the percentage of minority students enrolled in the school?

3. Are new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems related to teacher satisfaction?

Regular full-time and part-time teachers assigned to kindergarten through 12th grade from a nationally representative sample were included in this study. Perceptions of teachers who had less than three years of teaching experience were analyzed in this study. Two statistical techniques were applied in the analysis of the data. The one-way analysis of variance was used to (a) examine the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems, (b) determine how the perceptions vary by school factors, and (c) describe the relationship between new teachers’ perceptions of school problems and teacher satisfaction. The chi-square test was used to analyze physical attacks and threats against teachers in the last 12 months.

Conclusions and Discussion

Conclusions from this study are both consistent with and yet challenge previous research on school problems. The new teachers in this study provided an
interesting perspective on the trend and severity of school problems. New teachers’ perspectives on these problems also allowed the researcher to describe the relationship between discipline-related school problems and teacher satisfaction.

**What is the trend of new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems?**

New teachers perceive discipline-related school problems increased slightly between 1987–1994. New teachers reported that tardiness, absenteeism, cutting class, physical conflicts, and verbal abuse of teachers were all more serious in 1994 than in 1987. Examination of the means and effect sizes reveal a different perspective. The means for teachers’ perceptions of school problems in 1987–88 are very close to the means from 1990–91 and 1993–94. The effect sizes are close to zero for all school problems analyzed in this study. Thus, it is impossible to conclude that discipline-related school problems increased between 1987–88 and 1993–94.

Some researchers report increased discipline problems within schools (Kopka, 1997; Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). However, other researchers have found that school violence has actually decreased and the media is responsible for the public’s overreaction to school safety (Dwyer et al., 2000; Hyman & Snook, 2000). Kaufman et al. (2000) reported that students seem to feel more secure at school now than a few years ago.

**Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by teacher gender?**

Male teachers perceive discipline-related school problems to be slightly more concerning than female teachers. The only problem perceived by females to be more
severe than males was physical conflicts among students. This challenges research by Meyer (2000) who concluded that more females believe schools to be unsafe than males. This does support the research by Rong (1996) that teacher gender does impact perceptions of student behavior. However, since the means were very similar and the effect sizes were close to zero, no strong conclusions can be made regarding the relationship between teacher gender and new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems.

**Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by the level of students the teacher teaches?**

Although secondary school teachers perceive school problems to be slightly more severe and are more likely to be threatened than elementary school teachers, the means are again similar. In previous studies researchers have concluded that secondary schools are traditionally more violent than elementary schools (Feldhusen, 1978; Kiser-Kling, 1995; National Center for Education Statistics and The Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999; Shen, 1997a). Consistent with Henke et al. (1997), the results from this study indicate that elementary school teachers are slightly more likely to be physically attacked than secondary school teachers. However, the effect sizes and similar means in this study do not allow strong conclusions to be made.

**Do new teachers’ perceptions of school problems vary by the school size?**

There is a direct relationship between school size and teachers’ perceptions of school problems. Teachers in larger schools perceive school problems to be more severe than teachers’ perceptions from small schools. This is a pattern worth
watching in the future. This link between school size and school problems is supported by previous research (Ciolfi, 1993; McConnell, 1985; Rossi & Daugherty, 1996). New teachers' in medium-sized schools are slightly more likely to be physically attacked by their students than teachers in smaller and larger schools. However, the percentages are very close and the effect sizes are very small, so no strong conclusions can be drawn.

*Do new teachers' perceptions of school problems vary by the location of the school?*

Previous research conclusions indicate the location of the school does affect new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems (Henke et al., 1997; Shen, 1997a). In all of the school problems examined, urban schools fared the worst. New teachers in urban schools perceive tardiness, absenteeism, cutting class, physical conflicts, verbal abuse, disrespect, behavior interferes with teaching, physical attacks against teachers, and threats by students to be slightly more severe than teachers in suburban or rural schools. The greatest differences are between rural and urban new teachers' perceptions of school problems. Overall, new teachers in rural, suburban, and urban schools perceive school problems to be moderate. The means of rural, suburban, and urban new teachers were similar, and the effect sizes were quite small. Thus, no strong conclusions can be made.

*Do new teachers' perceptions of school problems vary by the percentage of minority students?*
Statistical significance was detected in terms of the percentage of minority students enrolled in a school and new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems. However, the means were less than one standard deviation point away from each other, and the effect sizes were close to zero. There was a weak trend that as the percentage of minority student enrollment increased from 0–4% to 50–100%, so did teachers’ perceptions of the severity of school problems. This could be an example of low expectations; teachers expect minorities to misbehave, therefore the students misbehave. Wolffe (1996) found that education majors expected greater discipline problems in urban schools where large minority populations are enrolled. Previous research by Ciolfi (1993) and Skiba and Peterson (1999) found that minorities are overrepresented in the application of harsh discipline such as expulsion and corporal punishment and under represented in alternative disciplinary action. Although a weak trend was determined between schools with 0–19% minority enrollment and schools with 20–100% minority enrollment, no strong conclusions can be made.

*Are new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems related to teacher satisfaction?*

New teachers who perceive school problems to be more severe are also less satisfied with their jobs. Teachers who would not become teachers again perceive disrespect, absenteeism, and verbal abuse to be the top three discipline-related school problems. Teachers who would become teachers again perceive disrespect, absenteeism, and tardiness to be the most serious problems. Although both groups
agreed upon the two most serious school problems, there were slight differences in new teachers' perceptions of the severity of the problems. Teachers who would become teachers again perceived each school problem to be more severe than the other group, but the differences in means were less than one standard deviation point away from each other. Therefore, the differences were not large enough to draw strong conclusions.

Teachers who feel it is a waste of time to try to do their best also perceive school problems to be more severe than teachers who disagree. Both groups agree that the two most serious school problems are student disrespect of teachers and student absenteeism. They disagree slightly on the severity of all the discipline-related school problems. Although the means revealed only small differences, teachers who feel it is a waste of time to try to do their best perceive school problems as slightly more severe than the other groups. Statistically, this supports the idea that extrinsic factors such as student behavior impacts teacher satisfaction (Pagano et al., 1997; Perie et al., 1997). However, Henke et al. (1997) found that teachers who left teaching for other occupations were more likely than those who stayed to report that they were satisfied with their work. After evaluating the effect sizes of the satisfaction survey items analyzed in this study, no strong conclusions can be made regarding the relationship between new teachers' perceptions of school problems and teacher satisfaction.
Implications

The results of this study can be used to support and challenge previous research findings. Although statistical significance was detected the small mean differences and effect sizes do not allow strong conclusions to be made regarding new teachers' perceptions of discipline-related school problems. The limitations discussed in Chapter I highlight the fact that new teachers' perceptions since the 1993–94 school year may have changed dramatically by this time. The three causes for changes in teachers' perceptions are media coverage of school violence, the location of recent school violence, and government action to eliminate school violence. It is possible that the results from the Schools and Staffing Public School Teacher Survey from 1999–2000 will be quite different from the surveys used in this study.

First, there have been several school massacres since the 1993–94 school year. The most recent school shooting occurred in Santee, California in March 2001 when a 15-year-old student shot and killed two classmates and wounded others in a restroom. Of course, violence such as this grabs the local and national news headlines for an extended period. News correspondents delved into the details of the particular case and compared them to earlier cases. Local newspapers outlined school districts' weapon expulsions and discussed how far-away shootings affect area teens. This media frenzy has caused the public to believe that school violence of this type is escalating, when in fact this is a misconception (Johnson, 1999; Maeroff, 2000;
Martin, 2000). This attention may also negatively impact teachers' perceptions of school problems.

Another issue that affects teachers' perceptions of school problems since 1993–94 is the changing location of school shootings. Although the use of firearms by school-aged children is much greater among those who live in the inner city (Mercy & Rosenberg, 1998), most of the school shootings since 1998 occurred in rural or suburban schools. Teachers who once believed that school violence occurred mainly in urban schools may have changed their perceptions in the last few years. School violence is no longer seen as a strictly urban problem (Schwartz, 1996). In “An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools” (Vossekuil et al., 2000), the United States Secret Service found that in over half of school violence incidents, the attacker had selected at least one school administrator or teacher as a target. Not only are incidents occurring more frequently in traditionally “safe” rural and suburban schools, now teachers are also becoming targets of the violence.

Government action to eliminate school violence since 1994 may also result in different teacher perceptions of school problems. The thrust of government action began with the 1994 Gun Free Schools Act mandating the one-year expulsion of gun-toting students. Many local school boards instituted zero-tolerance policies that paralleled this law. Later, the federal government called for the publication of school safety guides such as, “School Shooter, A Threat Assessment Perspective” (O'Toole, 2000), “Indicators of School Crime and Safety” (Kaufman et al., 2000), and “Early
Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools” (Dwyer et al., 1998). These guides have both educated and perhaps frightened educators.

The results of this study provide a description of the trend of new teacher perceptions, various school factors that affect new teacher perceptions, and the relationship between teacher perceptions and satisfaction. Statistically significant differences were found, but because of small effect sizes and small actual differences between means and percentages in this study, no strong conclusions can be made regarding new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems. It is natural to assume that new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems have changed since the 1993–94 Public School Teacher Survey of the Schools and Staffing Survey. Extensive media coverage of recent school shootings, the shift in location of these shootings from urban to suburban and rural schools, and government action to combat school violence have each contributed to molding teacher perception. The following section contains recommendations for use of the results of this study and directions for future research.

Recommendations

As previously mentioned, new teachers’ perceptions of discipline-related school problems have likely changed since the data gathered for this study. Because of recent school shootings, the changing location of the shootings from urban to suburban and rural schools, and government action to increase school safety it is quite possible that new teachers’ perceptions are that school problems have changed since the 1993–94 school year. Therefore, further study of teachers’ perceptions of
discipline-related school problems is needed. The School and Staffing Survey is a nationally representative survey that offers rich data for the examination of discipline-related school problems. The data from the 1999–2000 Public School Teacher Survey will be released in the late spring 2001. Future studies using this survey can further inform school district and teacher education officials on teachers’ perceptions of the severity of school problems.

It is strongly recommended that subsequent quantitative research related to new teachers’ perception of school problems use the effect size as well as means and percentages for comparison. Similar studies did not readily provide this information for the reader to determine the practical significance of the conclusions (Henke et al., 1997; Rossi & Daugherty, 1996; U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). Studies that use national surveys such as the Schools and Staffing Survey can result in statistically significant findings because of the large sample size. Therefore, it is important that practical significance be determined before drawing strong conclusions.

This study did not result in large differences between survey years, school factors, or teacher satisfaction items. Some of the school problems included in this study may have created ambiguity. Several survey items were similar in nature and may have confused teacher perception. For example, absenteeism, tardiness, and cutting class were all included on the survey and may have moderated the actual effects of the school problem. Disrespect, verbal abuse, and misbehavior interferes with my teaching are similar problems that were listed as separate school problems.
Therefore, it is recommended that future research into discipline-related school problems use multiple sources for data collection. Future studies could be improved through triangulation by incorporating interviews, observations, and open-ended survey questions. Carefully using multiple methods of data collection will strengthen the validity and reliability of future studies.
Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
Date: January 31, 2001

To: James Sanders, Principal Investigator
   Amy Kavanaugh, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Michael S. Pritchard, Interim Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 01-01-#6

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems and Teacher Satisfaction" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: January 31, 2002
Appendix B

Permission to Use the School and Staffing Survey
Dear Ms. Kavanaugh:

This letter is to confirm your request about the public availability of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). SASS is a federal government-sponsored survey of schools, school districts, teachers, and principals, and all of the data collected are in the public domain. To preserve the confidentiality of respondents' identities, a restricted-use file is prepared for researchers. That restricted-use file is also available, once the researcher's sponsor agrees to comply with security requirements and to refrain from releasing any of the individually-identifiable data.

Sincerely,

Dan Kasprzyk
Program Director,
Schools and Staffing Survey
National Center for Education Statistics
Appendix C

Graphic Representation of New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems
New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems by Teacher Gender

- Tardiness
- Absenteeism
- Cutting Class
- Physical conflict
- Verbal abuse
- Disrespect
- Behavior interferes

Male
Female

Seriousness

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Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers by Teacher Gender

- **Male**
- **Female**

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New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems by School Level
Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers by School Level

- Elementary
- Secondary
New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems by School Size

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Bars represent different levels of seriousness for various discipline-related problems across different school sizes.
Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers by School Size

- Small
- Medium
- Large

Attacks vs. Threats

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New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems by School Location

[Bar chart showing the perceived seriousness of various discipline issues by urban, suburban, and rural school locations.]

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Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers
by School Location

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

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Attacks Threats

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New Teachers' Perceptions of Discipline-Related School Problems by Percentage of Minority Student Enrollment

- 0-4%
- 5-19%
- 20-49%
- 50-100%

Bar chart showing the seriousness of various discipline-related problems: Tardiness, Absenteeism, Cutting Class, Physical Conflict, Verbal Abuse, Disrespect, and Behavioral Interference. The chart compares different percentages of minority student enrollment.
Physical Attacks and Threats Against Teachers by Percentage of Minority Student Enrollment

- 0-4%
- 5-19%
- 20-49%
- 50% or more

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Taylor, B. (1999). *Beating the odds in teaching all children to read.* Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.


